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Two Men of Sandy Bar.

10771

A Drama.

By BRET HARTE.

BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge.
1888.

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BY JAMES R. OSGOOD & CO.

CAMBRIDGE: PRINTED AT THE RIVERSIDE PRESS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

"SANDY"	Son of Alexander Morton, sen.	*The Prodigals.*
JOHN OAKHURST	His former partner, personating the prodigal son, Sandy.	*The Prodigals.*
COL. STARBOTTLE	Alexander Morton, sen.'s, legal adviser.	
OLD MORTON	Alexander Morton, sen.	
DON JOSÉ	Father of Jovita Castro.	
CAPPER	A detective.	
CONCHO	Major-domo of Don José's rancho.	
YORK	An old friend of Oakhurst.	
PRITCHARD	An Australian convict.	
SOAPY, SILKY	His pals.	
JACKSON	Confidential clerk of Alexander Morton, jun., and confederate of Pritchard.	
HOP SING	A Chinese laundryman.	
SERVANT of Alexander Morton, sen. — POLICEMEN.		
MISS MARY MORRIS	The schoolmistress of Red Gulch, in love with Sandy, and cousin of Alexander Morton, sen.	
DONA JOVITA CASTRO,	In love with John Oakhurst, and daughter of Don José.	
THE DUCHESS	Wife of Pritchard, illegally married to Sandy, and former "flame" of John Oakhurst.	
MANUELA	Servant of Castro, and maid to Doña Jovita.	

ACT I.

The Rancho of the Blessed Innocents, and House of Don José Castro.

ACT II.

Red Gulch.

ACT III.

The Banking-House of Morton & Son, San Francisco.

ACT IV.

The Villa of Alexander Morton, sen., San Francisco.

COSTUMES.

ALEXANDER MORTON ("SANDY"). — First dress: Mexican *vaquero;* black velvet trousers open from knee, over white trousers; laced black velvet jacket, and broad white *sombrero;* large silver spurs. Second dress: miner's white duck jumper, and white duck trousers; (sailor's) straw hat. Third dress: fashionable morning costume. Fourth dress: full evening dress.

JOHN OAKHURST. — First dress: riding-dress, black, elegantly fitting. Second and third dress: fashionable. Fourth dress: full evening dress.

COL. STARBOTTLE. — First dress: blue double-breasted frock, and white "strapped" trousers; white hat. Second dress: same coat, blue trousers, and black broad-brimmed felt hat; cane, *semper;* ruffles, *semper.* Third dress: the same. Fourth dress: the same, with pumps.

YORK. — Fashionable morning dress.

JACKSON. — Business suit.

CONCHO. — First dress: *vaquero's* dress. Second dress: citizen's dress.

HOP SING. — Dress of Chinese coolie: dark-blue blouse, and dark-blue drawers gathered at ankles; straw conical hat, and wooden *sabots.*

DON JOSÉ. — First dress: *serapé,* black, with gold embroidery. Second dress: fashionable black suit, with broad-brimmed black stiff *sombrero.*

OLD MORTON. — First, second, third, and fourth dress: black, stiff, with white cravat.

CAPPER. — Ordinary dress of period.

MISS MARY. — First dress: tasteful calico morning dress. Second and third dress: lady's walking costume — fashionable. Fourth dress: full dress.

DOÑA JOVITA. — First dress: handsome Spanish dress, with *manta.* Second dress: more elaborate, same quality.

THE DUCHESS. — First dress: elaborate but extravagant fashionable costume. Second dress: travelling dress.

MANUELA. — The *saya y manta;* white waist, and white or black skirt, with flowers.

TWO MEN OF SANDY BAR.

ACT I.

SCENE 1. — *Courtyard and Corridors of the Rancho.*

MANUELA [*arranging supper-table in corridor* L., *solus*]. There! Tortillas, chocolate, olives, and — the whiskey of the Americans! And supper's ready. But why Don José chooses to-night, of all nights, with this heretic fog lying over the Mission Hills like a wet *serapé*, to take his supper out here, the saints only know. Perhaps it's some distrust of his madcap daughter, the Doña Jovita; perhaps to watch her — who knows? And now to find Diego. Ah, here he comes. So! The old story. He is getting Doña Jovita's horse ready for another madcap journey. Ah! [*Retires to table.*]

Enter cautiously from corridor, L., SANDY MORTON, *carrying lady's saddle and blanket; starts on observing* MANUELA, *and hastily hides saddle and blanket in recess.*

Sandy [*aside*]. She's alone. I reckon the old man's at his siesta yet. Ef he'll only hang onto

that snooze ten minutes longer, I'll manage to let that gal Jovita slip out to that yer fandango, and no questions asked.

Manuela [*calling* SANDY]. Diego!

Sandy [*aside, without heeding her*]. That's a sweet voice for a serenade. Round, full, high-shouldered, and calkilated to fetch a man every time. Only thar ain't, to my sartain knowledge, one o' them chaps within a mile of the rancho. [*Laughs.*]

Manuela. Diego!

Sandy [*aside*]. Oh, go on! That's the style o' them Greasers. They'll stand rooted in their tracks, and yell for a chap without knowin' whether he's in sight or sound.

Manuela [*approaching Sandy impatiently*]. Diego!

Sandy [*starting, aside*]. The devil! Why, that's *me* she's after. [*Laughs.*] I clean disremembered that when I kem yer I tole those chaps my name was James, — James Smith [*laughs*], and thet they might call me "Jim." And De-a-go's their lingo for Jim. [*Aloud.*] Well, my beauty, De-a-go it is. Now, wot's up?

Manuela. Eh? no sabe!

Sandy. Wot's your little game? [*Embraces her.*]

Manuela [*aside, and recoiling coquettishly*]. Mother of God! He must be drunk again. These Americans have no time for love when they are sober. [*Aloud and coquettishly.*] Let me go, Diego. Don José is coming. He has sent for you. He takes his supper to-night on the corridor. Listen, Diego. He must not see you thus. You have been drinking

again. I will keep you from him. I will say you are not well.

Sandy. Couldn't you, my darling, keep him from *me?* Couldn't you make him think *he* was sick? Couldn't you say he's exposin' his precious health by sittin' out thar to-night; thet ther's chills and fever in every breath? [*Aside.*] Ef the old Don plants himself in that chair, that gal's chances for goin' out to-night is gone up.

Manuela. Never. He would suspect at once. Listen, Diego. If Don José does not know that his daughter steals away with you to meet some *caballero*, some *lover*, — you understand, Diego, — it is because he does not know, or would not *seem* to know, what every one else in the rancho knows. Have a care, foolish Diego! If Don José is old and blind, look you, friend, we are *not.* You understand?

Sandy [*aside*]. What the devil does she expect? — money? No! [*Aloud.*] Look yer, Manuela, you ain't goin' to blow on that young gal! [*Putting his arm around her waist.*] Allowin' that she hez a lover, thar ain't nothin' onnateral in thet, bein' a purty sort o' gal. Why, suppose somebody should see you and me together like this, and should just let on to the old man.

Manuela. Hush! [*Disengaging herself.*] Hush! He is coming. Let me go, Diego. It is Don José!

Enter DON JOSÉ, *who walks gravely to the table, and seats himself.* MANUELA *retires to table.*

Sandy [*aside*]. I wonder if he saw us. I hope he

did: it would shut that Manuela's mouth for a month of Sundays. [*Laughs.*] God forgive me for it! I've done a heap of things for that young gal Doña Jovita; but this yer gittin' soft on the Greaser maid-servant to help out the misses, is a little more than Sandy Morton bargained fur.

Don José [*to* MANUELA]. You can retire. Diego will attend me. [*Looks at* DIEGO *attentively.*]

[*Exit* MANUELA.

Sandy [*aside*]. Diego will attend him! Why, blast his yeller skin, does he allow that Sandy Morton hired out as a purty waiter-gal? Because I calkilated to feed his horses, it ain't no reason thet my dooty to animals don't stop thar. Pass his hash! [*Turns to follow* MANUELA, *but stops.*] Hello, Sandy! wot are ye doin', eh? You ain't going back on Miss Jovita, and jest spile that gal's chances to git out to-night, on'y to teach that God-forsaken old gov'ment mule manners? No! I'll humor the old man, and keep one eye out for the gal. [*Comes to table, and leans familiarly over the back of* DON JOSÉ'S *chair.*]

Don José [*aside*]. He seems insulted and annoyed. His manner strengthens my worst suspicions. He has not expected this. [*Aloud.*] Chocolate, Diego.

Sandy [*leaning over table carelessly*]. Yes, I reckon it's somewhar thar.

Don José [*aside*]. He is unused to menial labor. If I should be right in my suspicions! if he really were Doña Jovita's secret lover! This gallantry with the servants only a deceit! *Bueno!* I will watch him. [*Aloud.*] Chocolate, Diego!

Sandy [*aside*]. I wonder if the old fool reckons I'll pour it out. Well, seein's he's the oldest. [*Pours chocolate awkwardly, and spills it on the table and* DON JOSÉ.]

Don José [*aside*]. He *is* embarrassed. I am right. [*Aloud.*] Diego!

Sandy [*leaning confidentially over* DON JOSÉ'S *chair*]. Well, old man!

Don José. Three months ago my daughter the Doña Jovita picked you up, a wandering vagabond, in the streets of the Mission. [*Aside.*] He does not seem ashamed. [*Aloud.*] She — she — ahem! The *aguardiente*, Diego.

Sandy [*aside*]. That means the whiskey. It's wonderful how quick a man learns Spanish. [*Passes the bottle, fills* DON JOSÉ'S *glass, and then his own.* DON JOSÉ *recoils in astonishment.*] I looks toward ye, ole man. [*Tosses off liquor.*]

Don José [*aside*]. This familiarity! He *is* a gentleman. *Bueno!* [*Aloud.*] She was thrown from her horse; her skirt caught in the stirrup; she was dragged; you saved her life. You—

Sandy [*interrupting, confidentially drawing a chair to the table, and seating himself.*] Look yer! I'll tell you all about it. It wasn't that gal's fault, ole man. The hoss shied at me, lying drunk in a ditch, you see; the hoss backed, the surcle broke; it warn't in human natur for her to keep her seat, and that gal rides like an angel; but the mustang throwed her. Well, I sorter got in the way o' thet hoss, and it stopped. Hevin' bin the cause o' the hoss shyin', for

I reckon I didn't look much like an angel lyin' in that ditch, it was about the only squar thing for me to waltz in and help the gal. Thar, thet's about the way the thing pints. Now, don't you go and hold that agin her!

Don José. Well, well! She was grateful. She has a strange fondness for you Americans; and at her solicitation I gave you — *you*, an unknown vagrant — employment here as groom. You comprehend, Diego. I, Don José Castro, proprietor of this rancho, with an hundred idle *vaqueros* on my hands, — I made a place for you.

Sandy [*meditatively*]. Umph.

Don José. You said you would reform. How have you kept your word? You were drunk last Wednesday.

Sandy. Thet's so.

Don José. And again last Saturday.

Sandy [*slowly*]. Look yer, ole man, don't ye be too hard on me: that was the same old drunk.

Don José. I am in no mood for trifling. Hark ye, friend Diego. You have seen, perhaps, — who has not? — that I am a fond, an indulgent father. But even my consideration for my daughter's strange tastes and follies has its limit. Your conduct is a disgrace to the rancho. You must go.

Sandy [*meditatively*]. Well, I reckon, perhaps I'd better.

Don José [*aside*]. His coolness is suspicious. Can it be that he expects the girl will follow him? Mother of God! perhaps it has been already planned

between them. Good! Thank Heaven I can end it here. [*Aloud.*] Diego!

Sandy. Old man.

Don José. For my daughter's sake, you understand, — for her sake, — I am willing to try you once more. Hark ye! My daughter is young, foolish, and romantic. I have reason to believe, from her conduct lately, that she has contracted an intimacy with some Americaño, and that in her ignorance, her foolishness, she has allowed that man to believe that he might aspire to her hand. Good! Now listen to me. You shall stay in her service. You shall find out, — you are in her confidence, — you shall find out this American, this adventurer, this lover if you please, of the Doña Jovita my daughter; and you will tell him this, — you will tell him that a union with him is impossible, forbidden; that the hour she attempts it, without my consent, she is *penniless;* that this estate, this rancho, passes into the hands of the Holy Church, where even your laws cannot reach it.

Sandy [*leaning familiarly over the table*]. But suppose that he sees that little bluff, and calls ye.

Don José. I do not comprehend you [*coldly*].

Sandy. Suppose he loves that gal, and will take her as she stands, without a cent, or hide or hair of yer old cattle.

Don José [*scornfully*]. Suppose — a miracle! Hark ye, Diego! It is now five years since I have known your countrymen, these smart Americaños. I have yet to know when love, sentiment, friendship,

was worth any more than a money value in your market.

Sandy [*truculently and drunkenly*]. You hev, hev ye? Well, look yar, ole man. Suppose I *refuse*. Suppose I'd rather go than act as a spy on that young gal your darter! Suppose that — hic — allowin' she's my friend, I'd rather starve in the gutters of the Mission than stand between her and the man she fancies. Hey? Suppose I would — damn me! Suppose I'd see you and your derned old rancho in — t'other place — hic — damn me. You hear me, ole man! That's the kind o' man I am — damn me.

Don José [*aside, rising contemptuously*]. It is as I suspected. Traitor. Ingrate! Satisfied that his scheme has failed, he is ready to abandon her. And this — *this* is the man for whom she has been ready to sacrifice every thing, — her home, her father! [*Aloud, coldly*]. Be it so, Diego: you shall go.

Sandy [*soberly and seriously, after a pause*]. Well, I reckon I had better. [*Rising.*] I've a few duds, old man, to put up. It won't take me long. [*Goes to* L., *and pauses.*]

Don José [*aside*]. Ah! he hesitates! He is changing his mind. [SANDY *returns slowly to table, pours out glass of liquor, nods to* DON JOSÉ, *and drinks.*] I looks towards ye, ole man. *Adios!* [*Exit* SANDY.

Don José. His coolness is perfect. If these Americans are cayotes in their advances, they are lions in retreat! *Bueno!* I begin to respect him. But it will be just as well to set Concho to track him to the Mission; and I will see that he leaves the rancho alone. [*Exit* JOSÉ.

Enter hurriedly JOVITA CASTRO, *in riding habit, with whip.*

So! Chiquita not yet saddled, and that spy Concho haunting the plains for the last half-hour. What an air of mystery! Something awful, something deliciously dreadful, has happened! Either my amiable drunkard has forgotten to despatch Concho on his usual fool's errand, or he is himself lying helpless in some ditch. Was there ever a girl so persecuted? With a father wrapped in mystery, a lover nameless and shrouded in the obscurity of some Olympian height, and her only confidant and messenger a Bacchus instead of a Mercury! Heigh ho! And in another hour Don Juan — he told me I might call him John — will be waiting for me outside the convent wall! What if Diego fails me? To go there alone would be madness! Who else would be as charmingly unconscious and inattentive as this American vagabond! [*Goes to* L.] Ah, my saddle and blanket hidden! He *has* been interrupted. Some one has been watching. This freak of my father's means something. And to-night, of all nights, the night that Oakhurst was to disclose himself, and tell me all! What is to be done? Hark! [DIEGO, *without, singing.*]

"Oh, here's your *aguardiente*,
Drink it down!"

Jovita. It is Diego; and, Mother of God! drunk again!

Enter SANDY, *carrying pack, intoxicated; staggers to*

centre, and, observing JOVITA, *takes off his hat respectfully.*

Jovita [*shaking him by the shoulders passionately*]. Diego! How dare you! And at such a time!

Sandy [*with drunken solemnity*]. Miss Jovita, did ye ever know me to be drunk afore at such a time?

Jovita. No.

Sandy. Zachy so. It's abnormal. And it means — the game's up.

Jovita. I do not understand. For the love of God, Diego, be plain!

Sandy [*solemnly and drunkenly*]. When I say your game's up, I mean the old man knows it all. You're blowed upon. Hearken, miss! [*Seriously and soberly.*] Your father knows all that I know; but, as it wasn't my business to interfere with, I hev sorter helped along. He knows that you meet a stranger, an American, in these rides with me.

Jovita [*passionately*]. Ingrate! You have not dared to tell him! [*Seizing him by the collar, and threatening him with the horsewhip.*]

Sandy [*rising with half-drunken, half-sober solemnity*]. One minit, miss! one minit! Don't ye! don't ye do that! Ef ye forget (and I don't blame ye for it), ef ye forget that I'm a man, don't ye, don't ye forget that you're a woman! Sit ye down, sit ye down, so! Now, ef ye'll kindly remember, miss, I never saw this yer man, yer lover. Ef ye'll recollect, miss, whenever you met him, I allers hung back and waited round in the mission or in the fields beyond for ye, and allowed ye to hev your own way, it bein' no

business o' mine. Thar isn't a man on the ranch, who, ef he'd had a mind to watch ye, wouldn't hev known more about yer lover than I do.

Jovita [*aside*]. He speaks truly. He always kept in the background. Even Don Juan never knew that I had an attendant until I told him. [*Aloud.*] I made a mistake, Diego. I was hasty. What am I to do? He is waiting for me even now.

Sandy. Well [*with drunken gravity*], ef ye can't go to him, I reckon it's the squar thing for him to come to ye.

Jovita. Recollect yourself, Diego. Be a man!

Sandy. Thash jus war I say. Let him be a man, and come to ye here. Let him ride up to this ranch like a man, and call out to yer father that he'll take ye jist as ye are, without the land. And if the old man allows, rather than hev ye marry that stranger, he'll give this yer place to the church, why, let him do it, and be damned.

Jovita [*recoiling, aside*]. So! That is their plan. Don José has worked on the fears or the cupidity of this drunken ingrate.

Sandy [*with drunken submission*]. Ye was speaking to me, miss. Ef ye'll take my advice, — a drunken man's advice, miss, — ye'll say to that lover of yours, ef he's afeard to come for ye here, to take ye as ye stand, he ain't no man for ye. And, until he does, ye'll do as the ole man says. Fur ef I do say it, miss, — and thar ain't no love lost between us, — he's a good father to ye. It ain't every day that a gal kin afford to swap a father like that, as she *does*

know, fur the husband that she *don't!* He's a proud old fool, miss; but to ye, to ye, he's clar grit all through.

Jovita [*passionately, aside*]. Tricked, fooled, like a child! and through the means of this treacherous, drunken tool. [*Stamping her foot.*] Ah! we shall see! You are wise, you are wise, Don José; but your daughter is not a novice, nor a helpless creature of the Holy Church [*Passionately.*] I'll — I'll become a Protestant to-morrow!

Sandy [*unheeding her passion, and becoming more earnest and self-possessed*]. Ef ye hed a father, miss, ez instead o' harkinin' to your slightest wish, and surroundin' ye with luxury, hed made your infancy a struggle for life among strangers, and your childhood a disgrace and a temptation; ef he had left ye with no company but want, with no companions but guilt, with no mother but suffering; ef he had made your home, this home, so unhappy, so vile, so terrible, so awful, that the crowded streets and gutters of a great city was something to fly to for relief; ef he had made his presence, his very name, — your name, miss, allowin' it was your father, — ef he had made that presence so hateful, that name so infamous, that exile, that flyin' to furrin' parts, that wanderin' among strange folks ez didn't know ye, was the only way to make life endurable; and ef he'd given ye, — I mean this good old man Don José, miss, — ef he'd given ye as part of yer heritage a taint, a weakness in yer very blood, a fondness for a poison, a poison that soothed ye like a vampire bat and sucked yer life-

blood [*seizing her arm*] ez it soothed ye; ef this curse that hung over ye dragged ye down day by day, till hating him, loathing him, ye saw yerself day by day becoming more and more like him, till ye knew that his fate was yours, and yours his,—why then, Miss Jovita [*rising with an hysterical, drunken laugh*], why then, I'd run away with ye myself, — I would, damn me!

Jovita [*who has been withdrawing from him scornfully*]. Well acted, Diego. Don José should have seen his pupil. Trust me, my father will reward you. [*Aside.*] And yet there were tears in his drunken eyes. Bah! it is the liquor: he is no longer sane. And, either hypocrite or imbecile, he is to be trusted no longer. But where and why is he going? [*Aloud.*] You are leaving us, Diego.

Sandy [*quietly*]. Well, the old man and me don't get on together.

Jovita [*scornfully*]. *Bueno!* I see. Then you abandon me?

Sandy [*quickly*]. To the old man, miss, — not the young one. [*Walks to the table, and begins to pour out liquor.*]

Jovita [*angrily*]. You would not dare to talk to me thus, if John Oakhurst — ah! [*Checking herself.*]

Sandy [*drops glass on table, hurries to centre, and seizes* DOÑA JOVITA]. Eh! Wot! Wot name did you say? [*Looks at her amazed and bewildered.*]

Jovita [*terrified, aside*]. Mother of God! What have I done? Broken my sacred pledge to keep his name secret. No! No! Diego did not hear me!

Surely this wretched drunkard does not know him. [*Aloud.*] Nothing. I said nothing: I mentioned no name.

Sandy [*still amazed, frightened, and bewildered, passing his hand over his forehead slowly*]. Ye mentioned no name? Surely. I am wild, crazed. Tell me, miss — ye didn't, — I know ye didn't, but I thought it sounded like it, — ye didn't mention the name of — of — of — John Oakhurst?

Jovita [*hurriedly*]. No, of course not! You terrify me, Diego. You are wild.

Sandy [*dropping her hand with a sigh of relief*]. No, no! In course ye didn't. I was wild, miss, wild; this drink has confused me yer. [*Pointing to his head.*] There are times when I hear that name, miss, — times when I see his face. [*Sadly.*] But it's when I've took too much — too much. I'll drink no more — no more! — to-night — to-night! [*Drops his head slowly in his hands.*]

Jovita [*looking at* DIEGO — *aside*]. Really, I'm feeling very uncomfortable. I'd like to ask a question of this maniac. But nonsense! Don Juan gave me to understand Oakhurst wasn't his real name; that is, he intimated there was something dreadful and mysterious about it that musn't be told, — something that would frighten people. *Holy Virgin!* it has! Why, this reckless vagabond here is pale and agitated. Don Juan shall explain this mystery to-night. But then, how shall I see him? Ah, I have it. The night of the last *festa*, when I could not leave the rancho, he begged me to show a light from the flat roof of the

upper corridor, that he might know I was thinking of him, — dear fellow! He will linger to-night at the Mission; he will see the light; he will know that I have not forgotten. He will approach the rancho; I shall manage to slip away at midnight to the ruined Mission. I shall — ah, it is my father! Holy Virgin, befriend me now with self-possession. [*Stands quietly at* L., *looking toward* SANDY, *who still remains buried in thought, as* —

Enter DON JOSÉ; *regards his daughter and* DIEGO *with a sarcastic smile.*

Don José [*aside*]. *Bueno!* It is as I expected, — an explanation, an explosion, a lover's quarrel, an end to romance. From his looks I should say she has been teaching the adventurer a lesson. Good! I could embrace her. [*Crosses to* SANDY — *aloud.*] You still here!

Sandy [*rising with a start*]. Yes! I — a — I was only taking leave of Miss Jovita that hez bin kind to me. She's a good gal, ole man, and won't be any the worse when I'm gone. — Good-by, Miss Jovita [*extending his hand*]: I wish ye luck.

Jovita [*coldly*]. *Adios*, friend Diego. [*Aside, hurriedly.*] You will not expose my secret?

Sandy [*aside*]. It ain't in me, miss. [*To* DON JOSÉ, *going.*] *Adios*, ole man. [*Shouldering his pack.*]

Don José. Adios, friend Diego. [*Formally.*] May good luck attend you! [*Aside.*] You understand, on your word as — as — as — *a gentleman!* — you have no further communication with this rancho, or aught that it contains.

Sandy [*gravely*]. I hear ye, ole man. *Adios.* [*Goes to gateway, but pauses at table, and begins to fill a glass of aguardiente.*]

Don José [*aside, looking at his daughter*]. I could embrace her now. She is truly a Castro. [*Aloud to* JOVITA.] Hark ye, little one! I have news that will please you, and — who knows? perhaps break up the monotony of the dull life of the rancho. To-night come to me two famous *caballeros*, *Americaños*, you understand: they will be here soon, even now. Retire, and make ready to receive them. [*Exit* JOVITA.]

Don José [*aside, looking at* SANDY]. He lingers. I shall not be satisfied until Concho has seen him safely beyond the Mission wall.

Enter CONCHO.

Concho. Two *caballeros* have dismounted in the corral, and seek the honor of Don José's presence.

Don José. Bueno! [*Aside.*] Follow that fellow beyond the Mission. [*Aloud.*] Admit the strangers. Did they give their names?

Concho. They did, Don José, — Col. Culpepper Starbottle and the Don Alexandro Morton.

Sandy [*dropping glass of aguardiente, and staggering stupidly to the centre, confronting* DON JOSÉ *and* CONCHO, *still holding bottle*]. Eh! Wot? Wot name did you say? [*Looks stupidly and amazedly at* CONCHO *and* DON JOSÉ, *and then slowly passes his hand over his forehead. Then slowly and apologetically.*] I axes your pardon, Don José, and yours, sir [*to* CONCHO], but I

thought ye called me. No! — that ez — I mean — I mean — I'm a little off color here [*pointing to his head*]. I don't follow suit — I — eh — eh! Oh! — ye'll pardon me, sir, but thar's names — perhaps yer darter will remember that I was took a bit ago on a name — thar's names sorter hangin' round me yer [*pointing to his head*], that I thinks I hear — but bein' drunk — I hopes ye'll excoos me. *Adios.* [*Staggers to gateway,* CONCHO *following.*]

Concho [*aside*]. There is something more in this than Don José would have known. I'll watch Diego, and keep an eye on Miss Jovita too.

Exit, following SANDY, *who, in exit, jostles against* COL. STARBOTTLE *entering, who stops and leans exhaustedly at the wall to get his breath; following him closely, and oblivious of* SANDY MORTON, ALEXANDER MORTON, sen. *Enter* COL. STARBOTTLE *and* ALEXANDER MORTON, sen.

SCENE 2. — *The Same.*

Col. Starbottle [*entering, to* DON JOSÉ]. Overlooking the insult of — er — inebriated individual, whose menial position in this — er — er — household precludes a demand for personal satisfaction, sir, I believe I have the honor of addressing Don José Castro. Very good, sir. Permit me, sir, to introduce myself as Col. Culpepper Starbottle — demn me! the legal adviser of Mr. Alexander Morton, sen., and I may add, sir, the friend of that gentleman, and as such, sir — er — er — personally — personally responsible.

Alexander Morton [*puritanically and lugubriously*]. As a God-fearing and forgiving Christian, Mr. Castro, I trust you will overlook the habitual profanity of the erring but well-meaning man, who, by the necessities of my situation, accompanies me. I am the person — a helpless sinner — mentioned in the letters which I believe have preceded me. As a professing member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, I have ventured, in the interest of works rather than faith, to overlook the plain doctrines of the church in claiming sympathy of a superstitious Papist.

Starbottle [*interrupting, aside to* ALEXANDER MORTON]. Ahem! ahem! [*Aloud to* DON JOSÉ.] My friend's manner, sir, reminds me of — er — er — Ram Bootgum Sing, first secretary of Turkish legation at Washington in '45; most remarkable man — demn me — most remarkable — and warm personal friend. Challenged Tod Robinson for putting him next to Hebrew banker at dinner, with remark — demn me — that they were both believers in the profit! he, he! Amusing, perhaps; irreverent, certainly. Fought with cimeters. Second pass, Ram divided Tod in two pieces — fact, sir — just here [*pointing*] in — er — er — regions of moral emotions. Upper half called to me, — said to me warningly — last words — never forget it, — "Star," — always called me Star, — "Respect man's religious convictions." Legs dead; emotion confined to upper part of body — pathetic picture. Ged, sir, something to be remembered!

Don José [*with grave Spanish courtesy*]. You are

welcome, gentlemen, to the rancho of the Blessed Fisherman. Your letters, with their honorable report, are here. Believe me, *señores*, in your modesty you have forgotten to mention your strongest claim to the hospitality of my house, — the royal right of strangers.

Morton. Angels before this have been entertained as strangers, says the Good Book; and that, I take it, is your authority for this ceremoniousness which else were but lip-service and Papist airs. But I am here in the performance of a duty, Mr. Castro, — the duty of a Christian father. I am seeking a prodigal son. I am seeking him in his wine-husks and among his harl —

Starbottle [*interrupting*]. A single moment. [*To* Don José.] Permit me to — er — er — explain. As my friend Mr. Morton states, we are, in fact, at present engaged in — er — er — quest — er — pilgrimage that possibly to some, unless deterred by considerations of responsibility — personal responsibility — sir — Ged, sir, might be looked upon as visionary, enthusiastic, sentimental, fanatical. We are seeking a son, or, as my friend tersely and scripturally expresses it — er — er — prodigal son. I say scripturally, sir, and tersely, but not, you understand it, literally, nor I may add, sir, legally. Ged, sir, as a precedent, I admit we are wrong. To the best of my knowledge, sir, the — er — Prodigal Son sought his own father. To be frank, sir, — and Ged, sir, if Culpepper Starbottle has a fault, it is frankness, sir. As Nelse Buckthorne said to me in Nashville, in '47,

"You would infer, Col. Starbottle, that I equivocate." I replied, "I do, sir; and permit me to add that equivocation has all the guilt of a lie, with cowardice superadded." The next morning at nine o'clock, Ged, sir, he gasped to me — he was lying on the ground, hole through his left lung just here [*illustrating with* DON JOSÉ'S *coat*], — he gasped, "If you have a merit, Star, above others, it is frankness!" his last words, sir, — demn me. . . . To be frank, sir, years ago, in the wild exuberance of youth, the son of this gentleman left his — er — er — er — boyhood's home, owing to an innocent but natural misunderstanding with the legal protector of his youth —

Morton [*interrupting gravely and demurely*]. Driven from home by my own sinful and then unregenerate hand —

Starbottle [*quickly*]. One moment, a simple moment. We will not weary you with — er — er — history, or the vagaries of youth. He — er — came to California in '49. A year ago, touched by — er — er — parental emotion and solicitude, my friend resolved to seek him here. Believing that the — er — er — lawlessness of — er — er — untrammelled youth and boyish inexperience might have led him into some trifling indiscretion, we have sought him successively in hospitals, almshouses, reformatories, State's prisons, lunatic and inebriate asylums, and — er — er — even on the monumental inscriptions of the — er — er — er — country churchyards. We have thus far, I grieve to say, although acquiring much and valuable information of a varied character and interest, as far

as the direct matter of our search, — we have been, I think I may say, unsuccessful. Our search has been attended with the — er — disbursement of some capital under my — er — er — direction, which, though large, represents quite inadequately the — er — er — earnestness of our endeavors.

Enter MANUELA.

Manuela [*to* DON JOSÉ]. The Doña Jovita is waiting to receive you.

Don José [*to* MORTON]. You shall tell me further of your interesting pilgrimage hereafter. At present my daughter awaits us to place this humble roof at your disposal. I am a widower, Don Alexandro, like yourself. When I say that, like you, I have an only child, and that I love her, you will understand how earnest is my sympathy. This way, gentlemen. [*Leading to door in corridor, and awaiting them.*]

Starbottle [*aside*]. Umph! an interview with lovely woman means — er — intoxication, but — er — er — no liquor. It's evident that the Don doesn't drink. Eh! [*Catches sight of table in corridor, and bottle.*] Oh, he does, but some absurd Spanish formality prevents his doing the polite thing before dinner. [*Aloud, to* DON JOSÉ.] One moment, sir, one moment. If you will — er — er — pardon the — er — seeming discourtesy, for which I am, I admit — er — personally responsible, I will for a few moments enjoy the — er — er — delicious air of the courtyard, and the beauties of Nature as displayed in the — er — sunset. I will — er — rejoin you and the — er — er — ladies a moment later.

Don José. The house is your own, señor: do as you will. This way, Don Alexandro.

[*Exit, in door* L., DON JOSÉ *and* MORTON, sen.

Starbottle. "Do as you will." Well, I don't understand Spanish ceremony, but that's certainly good English. [*Going to table.*] Eh! [*Smelling decanter.*] Robinson-County whiskey! Umph! I have observed that the spirit of American institutions, sir, are already penetrating the — er — er — superstitions of — er — foreign and effete civilizations. [*Pours out glass of whiskey, and drinks; pours again, and observes* MANUELA *watching him respectfully.*] What the Devil is that girl looking at? Eh! [*Puts down glass.*]

Manuela [*aside*]. He is fierce and warlike. Mother of God! But he is not so awful as that gray-haired *caballero*, who looks like a fasting St. Anthony. And he loves *aguardiente:* he will pity poor Diego the more. [*Aloud.*] Ahem! *Señor.* [*Courtesies coquettishly.*]

Col. Starbottle [*aside*]. Oh, I see. Ged! not a bad-looking girl, — a trifle dark, but Southern, and — er — tropical. Ged, Star, Star, this won't do, sir; no, sir. The filial affections of Æneas are not to be sacrificed through the blandishments of — er — Dodo — I mean a Dido.

Manuela. O *señor*, you are kind, you are good! You are an Americaño, one of a great nation. You will feel sympathy for a poor young man, — a mere *muchaco*, — one of your own race, who was a *vaquero* here, *señor.* He has been sent away from us here

disgraced, alone, hungry, perhaps penniless. [*Wipes her eyes.*]

Col. Starbottle. The Devil! Another prodigal. [*Aloud.*] My dear, the case you have just stated would appear to be the — er — er — normal condition of the — er — youth of America. But why was he discharged? [*Pouring out liquor.*]

Manuela [*demurely glancing at the colonel*]. He was drunk, *señor.*

Starbottle [*potently*]. Drunkenness, my child, which is — er — weakness in the — er — er — gentleman, in the subordinate is a crime. What — er — excites the social impulse and exhilarates the fancy of the — er — master of the house, in the performance of his duty, renders the servant unfit for his. Legally it is a breach of contract. I should give it as my opinion, — for which I am personally responsible, — that your friend Diego could not recover. Ged! [*Aside.*] I wonder if this scapegoat could be our black sheep.

Manuela. But that was not all, *señor.* It was an excuse only. He was sent away for helping our young lady to a cavalier. He was discharged because he would not be a traitor to her. He was sent away because he was too good, too honorable, — too — [*Bursts out crying.*]

Starbottle [*aside*]. Oh, the Devil! *this* is no Sandy Morton. [*Coming forward gravely.*] I have never yet analyzed the — er — er — character of the young gentleman I have the honor to assist in restoring to his family and society; but judging — er — calmly —

er — dispassionately, my knowledge of his own father — from what the old gentleman must have been in his unregenerate state, and knowing what he is now in his present reformed Christian condition, I should say calmly and deliberately that the son must be the most infernal and accomplished villain unhung. Ged I have a thought, an inspiration. [*To* MANUELA, *tapping her under the chin.*] I see, my dear; a lover, ha, ha! Ah, you rogue! Well, well, we will talk of this again. I will — er — er — interest myself in this Diego. [*Exit* MANUELA.]

Starbottle [*solus*]. How would it do to get up a prodigal? Umph. Something must be done soon: the old man grows languid in his search. My position as a sinecure is — er — in peril. A prodigal ready-made! But could I get a scoundrel bad enough to satisfy the old man? Ged, that's serious. Let me see: he admits that he is unable to recognize his own son in face, features, manner, or speech. Good! If I could pick up some rascal whose — er — irregularities didn't quite fill the bill, and could say — Ged! — that he was reforming. Reforming! Ged, Star! That very defect would show the hereditary taint, demn me! I must think of this seriously. Ged, Star! the idea is — an inspiration of humanity and virtue. Who knows? it might be the saving of the vagabond, — a crown of glory to the old man's age. Inspiration, did I say? Ged, Star, it's a *duty*, — a sacred, solemn duty, for which you are responsible, — personally responsible.

Lights down half. Enter from corridor L., MORTON, DON JOSÉ, *the* DOÑA JOVITA, *and* MANUELA.

Doña Jovita [*stepping forward with exaggerated Spanish courtesy*]. A thousand graces await your Excellency, Commander Don — Don —

Starbottle [*bowing to the ground with equal delight and exaggerated courtesy*]. Er — Coolpepero!

Doña Jovita. Don Culpepero! If we throw ourselevs unasked at your Excellency's feet [*courtesy*], if we appear unsought before the light of your Excellency's eyes [*courtesy*], if we err in maidenly decorum in thus seeking unbidden your Excellency's presence [*courtesy*], believe us, it is the fear of some greater, some graver indecorum in our conduct that has withdrawn your Excellency's person from us since you have graced our roof with your company. We know, Señor Commander, how superior are the charms of the American ladies. It is in no spirit of rivalry with them, but to show — Mother of God! — that we are not absolutely ugly, that we intrude upon your Excellency's solitude. [*Aside.*] I shall need the old fool, and shall use him.

Col. Starbottle [*who has been bowing and saluting with equal extravagance, during this speech — aside*]. Ged! she *is* beautiful! [*Aloud.*] Permit me er — er — Doña Jovita, to correct — Ged, I must say it, correct erroneous statements. The man who should — er — utter in my presence remarks disparaging those — er — charms it is my privilege to behold, I should hold responsible, — Ged! personally responsible. You — er — remind me of er — incident, trifling perhaps, but

pleasing, Charleston in '52, — a reception at John C. Calhoun's. A lady, one of the demnedest beautiful women you ever saw, said to me, "Star!" — she always called me Star, — "you've avoided me, you have, Star! I fear you are no longer my friend." — "Your friend, madam," I said. "No, I've avoided you because I am your lover." Ged, Miss Jovita, a fact — demn me. Sensation. Husband heard garbled report. He was old friend, but jealous, rash, indiscreet. Fell at first fire — umph — January 5th. Lady — beautiful woman — never forgave: went into convent. Sad affair. And all a mistake — demn me, — all a mistake, through perhaps extravagant gallantry and compliment. I lingered here, oblivious perhaps of — er — beauty, in the enjoyment of Nature.

Doña Jovita. Is there enough for your Excellency to share with me, since it must be my rival? See, the fog is clearing away: we shall have moonlight. [DON JOSÉ *and* MORTON *seat themselves at table.*] Shall we not let these venerable *caballeros* enjoy their confidences and experiences together? [*Aside.*] Don José watches me like a fox, does not intend to lose sight of me. How shall I show the light three times from the courtyard roof? I have it! [*Takes* STARBOTTLE'S *arm.*] It is too pleasant to withdraw. There is a view from the courtyard wall your Excellency should see. Will you accompany me? The ascent is easy.

Starbottle [*bowing*]. I will ascend, although, permit me to say, Doña Jovita, it would be — er — impossible

for me to be nearer — er — heaven, than -- er — at present.

Doña Jovita. Flatterer! Come, you shall tell me about this sad lady who died. Ah, Don Culpepero, let me hope all your experiences will not be so fatal to us! [*Exeunt* DOÑA JOVITA *and* STARBOTTLE.]

Morton [*aside*]. A froward daughter of Baal, and, if I mistake not, even now concocting mischief for this foolish, indulgent, stiff-necked father. [*Aloud.*] Your only daughter, I presume.

Don José. My darling, Don Alexandro. Motherless from her infancy. A little wild, and inclined to gayety, but I hope not seeking for more than these walls afford. I have checked her but seldom, Don Alexandro, and then I did not let her see my hand on the rein that held her back. I do not ask her confidence always: I only want her to know that when the time comes it can be given to me without fear.

Morton. Umph!

Don José [*leaning forward confidentially*]. To show that you have not intrusted your confidence regarding your wayward son — whom may the saints return to you! — to unsympathetic or inexperienced ears, I will impart a secret. A few weeks ago I detected an innocent intimacy between this foolish girl and a vagabond *vaquero* in my employ. You understand, it was on her part romantic, visionary; on his, calculating, shrewd, self-interested, for he expected to become my heir. I did not lock her up. I did not tax her with it. I humored it. To-day I satisfied the lover that his investment was not profitable, that a marriage

without my consent entailed the loss of the property, and then left them together. They parted in tears, think you, Don Alexandro? No, but mutually hating each other. The romance was over. An American would have opposed the girl, have driven her to secrecy, to an elopement perhaps. Eh?

Morton [*scornfully*]. And you believe that they have abandoned their plans?

Don Jose. — I am sure — hush! she is here!

Enter, on roof of corridor, STARBOTTLE *and* JOVITA.

Col. Starbottle. Really, a superb landscape! An admirable view of the — er — fog — rolling over the Mission Hills, the plains below, and the — er — er — single figure of — er — motionless horseman —

Doña Jovita [*quickly*]. Some belated *vaquero.* Do you smoke, Señor Commander?

Starbottle. At times.

Doña Jovita. With me. I will light a cigarette for you: it is the custom.

COL. STARBOTTLE *draws match from his pocket, and is about to light, but is stopped by* DOÑA JOVITA.

Doña Jovita. Pardon, your Excellency, but we cannot endure your American matches. There is a taper in the passage.

COL. STARBOTTLE *brings taper:* DOÑA JOVITA *turns to light cigarette, but manages to blow out candle.*

Doña Jovita. I must try your gallantry again. That is once I have failed. [*Significantly.*]

COL. STARBOTTLE *relights candle, business, same results.*

Doña Jovita. I am stupid and nervous to-night. I have failed *twice.* [*With emphasis.*]

COL. STARBOTTLE *repeats business with candle.* DOÑA JOVITA *lights cigarette, hands it to the colonel.*

Doña Jovita. Thrice, and I have succeeded. [*Blows out candle.*]

Col. Starbottle. A thousand thanks! There is a — er — er — light on the plain.

Doña Jovita [*hastily*]. It is the *vaqueros* returning. My father gives a *festa* to peons in honor of your arrival. There will be a dance. You have been patient, Señor Commander: you shall have my hand for a waltz.

Enter vaqueros, their wives and daughters. A dance, during which the "sembi canca" is danced by COL. STARBOTTLE *and* DOÑA JOVITA. *Business, during which the bell of Mission Church, faintly illuminated beyond the wall, strikes twelve. Dancers withdraw hurriedly, leaving alone* MANUELA, DOÑA JOVITA, COL. STARBOTTLE, DON JOSÉ, *and* CONCHO. CONCHO *formally hands keys to* DON JOSÉ.

Don José [*delivering keys to* MORTON *with stately impressiveness*]. Take them, Don Alexandro Morton, and with them all that they unlock for bliss or bale. Take them, noble guest, and with them the homage of this family, — to-night, Don Alexandro, your humble servants. Good-night, gentlemen. May a thousand angels attend you, O Don Alexandro and Don Culpepero!

Doña Jovita. Good-night, Don Alexandro. May your dreams to-night see all your wishes fulfilled! Good-night, O Señor Commander. May she you dream of be as happy as you!

Manuela and Concho [*together*]. Good-night, O *señores* and illustrious gentlemen! May the Blessed Fisherman watch over you! [*Both parties retreat into opposite corridors, bowing.*]

MANUELA.	CONCHO.	MORTON.
DON JOSÉ.	JOVITA.	STARBOTTLE

SCENE 3. — *The same. Stage darkened. Fog passing beyond wall outside, and occasionally obscuring moonlit landscape beyond. Enter* JOVITA *softly, from corridor* L. *Her face is partly hidden by Spanish mantilla.*

Jovita. All quiet at last; and, thanks to much *aguardiente*, my warlike admirer snores peacefully above. Yet I could swear I heard the old Puritan's door creak as I descended! Pshaw! What matters! [*Goes to gateway, and tries gate.*] Locked! *Carramba!* I see it now. Under the pretext of reviving the old ceremony, Don José has locked the gates, and placed me in the custody of his guest. Stay! There is a door leading to the corral from the passage by Concho's room. *Bueno!* Don José shall see! [*Exit* R.]

Enter cautiously R. OLD MORTON.

Old Morton. I was not mistaken! It was the skirt of that Jezebel daughter that whisked past my door a moment ago, and her figure that flitted down that corridor. So! The lover driven out of the house at four, P.M., and at twelve o'clock at night the young

lady trying the gate secretly. This may be Spanish resignation and filial submission, but it looks very like Yankee disobedience and forwardness. Perhaps it's well that the keys are in my pocket. This fond confiding Papist may find the heretic American father of some service. [*Conceals himself behind pillar of corridor.*]

After a pause the head of JOHN OAKHURST *appears over the wall of corridor: he climbs up to roof of corridor, and descends very quietly and deliberately to stage.*

Oakhurst [*dusting his clothing with his handkerchief*]. I never knew before why these Spaniards covered their adobe walls with whitewash. [*Leans against pillar in shadow*].

Re-enter JOVITA, *hastily.*

Jovita. All is lost; the corral door is locked; the key is outside, and Concho is gone, — gone where? *Madre di Dios!* to discover, perhaps to kill him.

Oakhurst [*approaching her*]. No.

Jovita. Juan! [*Embracing him.*] But how did you get here? This is madness!

Oakhurst. As you did not come to the mission, I came to the rancho. I found the gate locked — by the way, is not that a novelty here? — I climbed the wall. But you, Miss Castro, you are trembling! Your little hands are cold!

Jovita [*glancing around*]. Nothing, nothing! But you are running a terrible risk. At any moment we may be discovered.

Oakhurst. I understand you: it would be bad for the discoverer. Never fear, I will be patient.

Jovita. But I feared that you might meet Concho.

Oakhurst. Concho — Concho — [*meditatively*]. Let me see, — tall, dark, long in the arm, weighs about one hundred and eighty, and active.

Jovita. Yes; tell me! You have met him?

Oakhurst. Possibly, possibly. Was he a friend of yours?

Jovita. No!

Oakhurst. That's better. Are his pursuits here sedentary, or active?

Jovita. He is my father's *major-domo.*

Oakhurst. I see: a sinecure. [*Aside.*] Well, if he has to lay up for a week or two, the rancho won't suffer.

Jovita. Well?

Oakhurst. Well!

Jovita [*passionately*]. There, having scaled the wall, at the risk of being discovered — this is all you have to say! [*Turning away.*]

Oakhurst [*quietly*]. Perhaps, Jovita [*taking her hand with grave earnestness*], to a clandestine intimacy like ours there is but one end. It is not merely elopement, not merely marriage, it is exposure! Sooner or later you and I must face the eyes we now shun. What matters if to-night or later?

Jovita [*quickly*]. I am ready. It was you who —

Oakhurst. It was I who first demanded secrecy; but it was I who told you when we last met that I would tell you why to-night.

Jovita. I am ready; but hear me, Juan, nothing can change my faith in you!

Oakhurst [*sadly*]. You know not what you say. Listen, my child. I am a gambler. Not the man who lavishes his fortune at the gaming-table for excitement's sake; not the fanatic who stakes his own earnings — perhaps the confided earnings of others — on a single *coup*. No, he is the man who loses, — whom the world deplores, pities, and forgives. I am the man who wins — whom the world hates and despises.

Jovita. I do not understand you, Juan.

Oakhurst. So much the better, perhaps. But you must hear me. I make a profession — an occupation more exacting, more wearying, more laborious, than that of your meanest herdsman — of that which others make a dissipation of the senses. And yet, Jovita, there is not the meanest *vaquero* in this ranch, who, playing against me, winning or losing, is not held to be my superior. I have no friends — only confederates. Even the woman who dares to pity me must do it in secret.

Jovita. But you will abandon this dreadful trade. As the son of the rich Don José, no one dare scorn you. My father will relent. I am his heiress.

Oakhurst. No more, Jovita, no more. If I were the man who could purchase the world's respect through a woman's weakness for him, I should not be here to-night. I am not here to sue your father's daughter with hopes of forgiveness, promises of reformation. Reformation, in a man like me, means

cowardice or self-interest. [OLD MORTON, *becoming excited, leans slowly out from the shadow of the pillar, listening intently.*] I am here to take, by force if necessary, a gambler's wife, — the woman who will share my fortunes, my disgrace, my losses; who is willing to leave her old life of indulgence, of luxury, of respectability, for mine. You are frightened, little dove: compose yourself [*soothing her tenderly and sadly*]; you are frightened at the cruel hawk who has chosen you for a mate.

Old Morton [*aside*]. God in heaven! This is like HIM! like me! — like me, before the blessed Lord lifted me into regeneration. If it should be! [*Leans forward anxiously from pillar*].

Oakhurst [*aside*]. Still silent! Poor dove, I can hear her foolish heart flutter against mine. Another moment decides our fate. Another moment: John Oakhurst and freedom, or Red Gulch and — she is moving. [*To* JOVITA.] I am harsh, little one, and cold. Perhaps I have had much to make me so. But when [*with feeling*] I first met you; when, lifting my eyes to the church-porch, I saw your beautiful face; when, in sheer recklessness and bravado, I raised my hat to you; when you — you, Jovita — lifted your brave eyes to mine, and there, there in the sanctuary, returned my salute, — the salutation of the gambler, the outcast, the reprobate, — then, then I swore that you should be mine, if I tore you from the sanctuary. Speak now, Jovita: if it was coquetry, speak now; I forgive you: if it was sheer wantonness, speak now, I shall spare you: but if —

Jovita [*throwing herself in his arms*]. Love, Juan! I am yours, now and forever. [*Pause.*] But you have not told me all. I will go with you to-night — now. I leave behind me all, — my home, my father, my — [*pause*] my name. You have forgotten, Juan, you have not told me what I change *that* for: you have not told me *yours.*

OLD MORTON, *in eager excitement, leans beyond shadow of pillar.*

Oakhurst [*embracing her tenderly, with a smile*]. If I have not told you who I am, it was because, darling, it was more important that you should know what I am. Now that you know that — why — [*embarrassedly*] I have nothing more to tell. I did not wish you to repeat the name of Oakhurst — because — [*aside*] how the Devil shall I tell her that Oakhurst was my real name, after all, and that I only feared she might divulge it? — [*aloud*] because — because — [*determinedly*] I doubted your ability to keep a secret. My real name is — [*looks up, and sees* MORTON *leaning beyond pillar*] is a secret. [*Pause, in which* OAKHURST *slowly recovers his coolness.*] It will be given to the good priest who to-night joins our fate forever, Jovita, — forever, in spite of calumny, opposition, or *spies!* the *padre* whom we shall reach, if enough life remains in your pulse and mine to clasp these hands together. [*After a pause.*] Are you content?

Jovita. I am.

Oakhurst. Then there is not a moment to lose. Retire, and prepare yourself for a journey. I will wait here.

Jovita. I am ready now.

Oakhurst [*looking toward pillar*]. Pardon, my darling: there was a bracelet — a mere trifle — I once gave you. It is not on your wrist. I am a trifle superstitious, perhaps: it was my first gift. Bring it with you. I will wait. Go! [*Exit* JOVITA.

OAKHURST *watches her exit, lounges indifferently toward gate; when opposite pillar, suddenly seizes* MORTON *by the throat, and drags him noiselessly to centre.*

Oakhurst [*hurriedly*]. One outcry, — a single word, — and it is your last. I care not who *you* may be! — who I am, — you have heard enough to know, at least, that you are in the grip of a desperate man. [*Keys fall from* MORTON'S *hand.* OAKHURST *seizes them.*] Silence! on your life.

Morton [*struggling*]. You would not dare! I command you —

Oakhurst [*dragging him to gateway*]. Out you must go.

Morton. Stop, I command you. *I* never turned *my* father out of doors!

Oakhurst [*gazing at* MORTON]. It is an *old* man! I release you. Do as you will, only remember that that girl is mine forever, that there is no power on earth will keep me from her.

Morton. On conditions.

Oakhurst. Who are you that make conditions? You are not — her father?

Morton. No, but I am *yours!* Alexander Morton I charge you to hear me.

Oakhurst [*starting in astonishment; aside*]. Sandy Morton, my lost partner's father! This is fate.

Morton. You are astonished; but I thought so. Ay, you will hear me now! I am your father, Alexander Morton, who drove you, a helpless boy, into disgrace and misery. I know your shameless life: for twenty years it was mine, and worse, until, by the grace of God, I reformed, as you shall. I have stopped you in a disgraceful act. Your mother — God forgive me! — left *her* house, for *my* arms, as wickedly, as wantonly, as shamelessly —

Oakhurst. Stop, old man! Stop! Another word [*seizing him*], and I may forget your years.

Morton. But not your blood. No, Alexander Morton, I have come thousands of miles for one sacred purpose, — to save you; and I shall, with God's will, do it now. Be it so, on one condition. You shall have this girl; but lawfully, openly, with the sanction of Heaven and your parents.

Oakhurst [*aside*]. I see a ray of hope. This is Sandy's father; the cold, insensate brute, who drove him into exile, the one bitter memory of his life. Sandy disappeared, irreclaimable, or living alone, hating irrevocably the author of his misery; why should not I —

Morton [*continuing*]. On one condition. Hear me, Alexander Morton. If within a year, you, abandoning your evil practices, your wayward life, seek to reform beneath my roof, I will make this proud Spanish Don glad to accept you as the more than equal of his daughter.

Oakhurst [*aside*]. It would be an easy deception. Sandy has given me the details of his early life. At least, before the imposition was discovered I shall be— [*Aloud.*] I—I— [*Aside.*] Perdition! *she* is coming! There is a light moving in the upper chamber. Don José is awakened. [*Aloud.*] I—I— accept.

Morton. It is well. Take these keys, open yonder gate, and fly! [*As* OAKHURST *hesitates.*] Obey me. I will meet your sweetheart, and explain all. You will come here at daylight in the morning, and claim admittance, not as a vagabond, a housebreaker, but as my son. You hesitate. Alexander Morton, I, your father, command you. Go!

OAKHURST *goes to the gate, opens it, as the sound of* DIEGO'S *voice, singing in the fog, comes faintly in.*

O yer's your Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!
O yer's your Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!
O yer's your Sandy Morton,
For he's drunk, and goin' a-courtin'.
O yer's your Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!

OAKHURST *recoils against gate,* MORTON *hesitates, as window in corridor opens, and* DON JOSÉ *calls from upper corridor.*

Don José. Concho! [*Pause.*] 'Tis that vagabond Diego, lost his way in the fog. Strange that Concho should have overlooked him. I will descend.

Morton [*to* OAKHURST]. Do you hear ?

Exit OAKHURST *through gateway.* MORTON *closes gate, and returns to centre. Enter* JOVITA *hurriedly.*

Jovita. I have it here. Quick! there is a light in Don José's chamber; my father is coming down. [*Sees* MORTON, *and screams.*]

Morton [*seizing her*]. Hush! for your own sake; for *his;* control yourself. He is gone, but he will return. [*To* JOVITA, *still struggling.*] Hush, I beg, Miss Jovita. I beg, I command you, my daughter. Hush!

Jovita [*whispering*]. His voice has changed. What does this mean? [*Aloud.*] Where has he gone? and why are *you* here ?

Morton [*slowly and seriously*]. He has left me here to answer the unanswered question you asked him. [*Enter* DON JOSÉ *and* COL. STARBOTTLE, R. *and* L.] I am here to tell you that I am his father, and that he is Alexander Morton.

TABLEAUX.

Curtain.

END OF ACT I.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Red Gulch. Sunset of river, and distant view of Sierras, snow-capped. Schoolhouse of logs in middle distance. Table of rocks in centre. On steps of schoolhouse two large bunches of flowers. Enter* STARBOTTLE, *slowly climbing rocks L., panting and exhausted. Seats himself on rock, foreground, and wipes his face with his pocket-handkerchief.*

Starbottle. This is evidently the er—locality. Here are the—er—groves of Academus—the heights of er—Ida. I should say that the unwillingness which the—er—divine Shakespeare points out in the—er—"whining schoolboy" is intensified in—er—climbing this height, and the—er—alacrity of his departure must be in exact ratio to his gravitation. Good idea. Ged, say it to schoolma'am. Wonder what she's like! Humph! the usual thin, weazened, hatchet-faced Yankee spinster, with an indecent familiarity with Webster's Dictionary! And this is the woman, Star, you're expected to discover, and bring back to affluence and plenty. This is the new fanaticism of Mr. Alexander Morton, sen. Ged! not satisfied with dragging his prodigal son out of merited obscurity, this miserable old lunatic commissions me to hunt up another of his abused relatives; some forty-fifth cousin, whose mother he had frozen,

beaten, or starved to death! And all this to please his prodigal! Ged! if that prodigal hadn't presented himself that morning, I'd have picked up — er — some — er — reduced gentleman — Ged, that knew how to spend the old man's money to better advantage. [*Musing.*] If this schoolmistress were barely good-looking, Star, — and she's sure to have fifty thousand from the old man — Ged, you might get even with Alexander, sen., for betrothing his prodigal to Doña Jovita, in spite of the — er — evident preference that the girl showed for you. Capital idea! If she's not positively hideous I'll do it! Ged! I'll reconnoitre first! [*Musing.*] I could stand one eye; yes — er — single eye would not be positively objectionable in the — er — present experiments of science toward the — er — the substitution of glass. Red hair, Star, is — er — Venetian, — the beauty of Giorgione. [*Goes up to schoolhouse window, and looks in.*] Too early! Seven empty benches; seven desks splashed with ink. The — er — rostrum of the awful Minerva empty, but — er — adorned with flowers, nosegays — demn me! And here, here on the — er — very threshold [*looking down*], floral tributes. The — er — conceit of these New England schoolma'ams, and their — er — evident Jesuitical influence over the young, is fraught, sir, fraught with — er — darkly political significance. Eh, Ged! there's a caricature on the blackboard. [*Laughing.*] Ha, ha! Absurd chalk outline of ridiculous fat person. Evidently the schoolma'am's admirer. Ged! immensely funny! Ah! boys will be boys. Like you, Star, just

like you, — always up to tricks like that. A sentence scrawled below the figure seems to be — er — explanation. Hem! [*Takes out eyeglass.*] Let's see [*reading.*] "This is old" — old — er — old — demme, sir! — "Starbottle!" This is infamous. I haven't been forty-eight hours in the place, and to my certain knowledge haven't spoken to a child. Ged, sir, it's the — er — posting of a libel! The woman, the — er — female, who permits this kind of thing, should be made responsible — er — personally responsible. Eh, hush! What have we here? [*Retires to ledge of rocks.*]

Enter MISS MARY L., *reading letter.*

Miss Mary. Strange! Is it all a dream? No! here are the familiar rocks, the distant snow-peaks, the schoolhouse, the spring below. An hour ago I was the poor schoolmistress of Red Gulch, with no ambition nor hope beyond this mountain wall; and now — oh, it must be a dream! But here is the letter. Certainly this is no delusion: it is too plain, formal, business-like. [*Reads.*]

MY DEAR COUSIN, — I address the only surviving child of my cousin Mary and her husband John Morris, both deceased. It is my duty as a Christian relative to provide you with a home, — to share with you that wealth and those blessings that a kind Providence has vouchsafed me. I am aware that my conduct to your father and mother, while in my sinful and unregenerate state, is no warrantee for my present promise; but my legal adviser, Col. Star-

bottle, who is empowered to treat with you, will assure you of the sincerity of my intention, and my legal ability to perform it. He will conduct you to my house; you will share its roof with me and my prodigal son Alexander, now by the grace of God restored, and mindful of the error of his ways. I enclose a draft for one thousand dollars: if you require more, draw upon me for the same.

Your cousin,

ALEXANDER MORTON, SEN.

My mother's cousin — so! Cousin Alexander! a rich man, and re-united to the son he drove into shameful exile. Well! we will see this confidential lawyer; and until then — until then — why, we are the schoolmistress of Red Gulch, and responsible for its youthful prodigals. [*Going to schoolhouse door.*]

Miss Mary [*stopping to examine flowers*]. Poor, poor Sandy! Another offering, and, as he fondly believes, unknown and anonymous! As if he were not visible in every petal and leaf! The *mariposa* blossom of the plain. The snow-flower I longed for, from those cool snow-drifts beyond the ridge. And I really believe he was sober when he arranged them. Poor fellow! I begin to think that the dissipated portion of this community are the most interesting. Ah! some one behind the rock, — Sandy, I'll wager. No! a stranger!

Col. Starbottle [*aside, and advancing*]. If I could make her think I left those flowers! [*Aloud.*] When I state that — er — I am perhaps — er — stranger —

Miss Mary [*interrupting him coldly*]. You explain, sir, your appearance on a spot which the rude courtesy of even this rude miner's camp has preserved from intrusion.

Starbottle [*slightly abashed, but recovering himself*]. Yes — Ged! — that is, I — er — saw you admiring — er — tribute — er — humble tribute of flowers. I am myself passionately devoted to flowers. Ged! I've spent hours — in — er — bending over the — er — graceful sunflower, in — er — plucking the timid violet from the overhanging but reluctant bough, in collecting the — er — er — *fauna* — I mean the — er — *flora* — of this — er — district.

Miss Mary [*who has been regarding him intently*]. Permit me to leave you in uninterrupted admiration of them. [*Handing him flowers.*] You will have ample time in your journey down the gulch to indulge your *curiosity!*

Hands STARBOTTLE *flowers, enters schoolhouse, and quietly closes door on* STARBOTTLE *as* SANDY MORTON *enters cautiously and sheepishly from left.* SANDY *stops in astonishment on observing* STARBOTTLE, *and remains by wing left.*

Starbottle [*smelling flowers, and not noticing* MISS MARY'S *absence*]. Beautiful — er — exquisite. [*Looking up at closed door.*] Ged! Most extraordinary disappearance! [*Looks around, and discovers* SANDY; *examines him for a moment through his eyeglass, and then, after a pause, inflates his chest, turns his back on* SANDY, *and advances to schoolhouse-door.* SANDY *comes quickly, and, as Starbottle raises his cane to rap on*

door, seizes his arm. Both men, regarding each other fixedly, holding each other, retreat slowly and cautiously to centre. Then STARBOTTLE *disengages his arm.*]

Sandy [*embarrassedly but determinedly*]. Look yer, stranger. By the rules of this camp, this place is sacred to the schoolma'am and her children.

Starbottle [*with lofty severity*]. It is! Then — er — permit me to ask, sir, what *you* are doing here.

Sandy [*embarrassed, and dropping his head in confusion*]. I was — passing. There is no school to-day.

Starbottle. Then, sir, Ged! permit me to — er — *demand — demand*, sir — an apology. You have laid, sir, your hand upon my person — demn me! Not the first time, sir, either; for, if I am not mistaken, you are the — er — inebriated menial, sir, who two months ago jostled me, sir, — demn me, — as I entered the rancho of my friend Don José Castro.

Sandy [*starting, aside*]. Don José! [*Aloud.*] Hush, hush! She will hear you. No — that is — [*stops, confused and embarrassed. Aside.*] She will hear of my disgrace. He will tell her the whole story.

Starbottle. I shall await your apology one hour. At the end of that time, if it is not forthcoming, I shall — er — er — waive your menial antecedents, and expect the — er — satisfaction of a gentleman. Good-morning, sir. [*Turns to schoolhouse.*]

Sandy. No, no: you shall not go!

Starbottle. Who will prevent me?

Sandy [*grappling him.*] *I* will. [*Appealingly.*] Look yer, stranger, don't provoke me, I, a desperate man, desperate and crazed with drink, — don't ye,

don't ye do it! For God's sake, take your hands off me! Ye don't know what ye do. Ah! [*Wildly, holding* STARBOTTLE *firmly, and forcing him backward to precipice beyond ledge of rocks.*] Hear me. Three years ago, in a moment like this, I dragged a man — my friend — to this precipice. I — I — no! no! — don't anger me now! [SANDY'S *grip on* STARBOTTLE *relaxes slightly, and his head droops.*]

Starbottle [*coolly*]. Permit me to remark, sir, that any reminiscence of your — er — friend — or any other man is — er — at this moment, irrelevant and impertinent. Permit me to point out the — er — fact, sir, that your hand is pressing heavily, demned heavily, on my shoulder.

Sandy [*fiercely*]. You shall not go!

Starbottle [*fiercely*]. Shall not?

Struggle. STARBOTTLE *draws derringer from his breast-pocket, and* SANDY *seizes his arm. In this position both parties struggle to ledge of rocks, and* COL. STARBOTTLE *is forced partly over.*

Miss Mary [*opening schoolhouse-door*]. I thought I heard voices. [*Looking toward ledge of rocks, where* COL. STARBOTTLE *and* SANDY *are partly hidden by trees. Both men relax grasp of each other at* MISS MARY'S *voice.*]

Col. Starbottle [*aloud and with voice slightly raised, to* SANDY]. By — er — leaning over this way a moment, a single moment, you will — er — perceive the trail I speak of. It follows the cañon to the right. It will bring you to — er — the settlement in an hour. [*To*

MISS MARY, *as if observing her for the first time.*] I believe I am — er — right; but, being — er — more familiar with the locality, you can direct the gentleman better.

SANDY *slowly sinks on his knees beside rock, with his face averted from schoolhouse, as* COL. STARBOTTLE *disengages himself, and advances jauntily and gallantly to schoolhouse.*

Col. Starbottle. In — er — er — showing the stranger the — er — way, I perhaps interrupted our interview. The — er — observances of — er — civility and humanity must not be foregone, even for — er — the ladies. I — er — believe I address Miss Mary Morris. When I — er — state that my name is Col. Starbottle, charged on mission of — er — delicate nature, I believe I — er — explain *my* intrusion.

MISS MARY *bows, and motions to schoolhouse-door;* COL. STARBOTTLE, *bowing deeply, enters; but* MISS MARY *remains standing by door, looking toward trees that hide* SANDY.

Miss Mary [*aside*]. I am sure it was Sandy's voice! But why does he conceal himself?

Sandy [*aside, rising slowly to his feet, with his back to schoolhouse-door*]. Even this conceited bully overcomes me, and shames me with his readiness and tact. He was quick to spare her — a stranger — the spectacle of two angry men. I — I — must needs wrangle before her very door! Well, well! better out of her sight forever, than an object of pity or terror. [*Exit slowly, and with downcast eyes, right.*]

Miss Mary [*watching the trail*]. It *was* Sandy! and this concealment means something more than bashfulness. Perhaps the stranger can explain. [*Enters schoolhouse, and closes door.*]

SCENE 2. — *The same. Enter* CONCHO, *lame, cautiously, from* R. *Pauses at* R., *and then beckons to* HOP SING, *who follows* R.

Concho [*impatiently*]. Well! you saw him?

Hop Sing. Me see him.

Concho. And you recognized him?

Hop Sing. No shabe likoquize.

Concho [*furiously*]. You knew him, eh? *Carramba!* You *knew* him.

Hop Sing [*slowly and sententiously*]. Me shabe man you callee Diego. Me shabbee Led Gulchee call Sandy. Me shabbee man Poker Flat callee Alexandlee Molton. Allee same, John! Allee same!

Concho [*rubbing his hands*]. *Bueno!* Good John! good John! And you knew he was called Alexander Morton? And go on — good John — go on!

Hop Sing. Me plentee washee shirtee — Melican man Poker Flat. Me plentee washee shirt Alexandlee Molton. Always litee, litee on shirt allee time. [*Pointing to tail of his blouse, and imitating writing with finger.*] Alexandlee Molton. Melican man tellee me — shirt say Alexandlee Molton — shabbee?

Concho. Bueno! Excellent John. Good John. His linen marked Alexander Morton. The proofs are gathering! [*crosses to* C.] — the letter I found in his

pack, addressed to Alexander Morton, Poker Flat, which first put me on his track; the story of his wife's infidelity, and her flight with his partner to Red Gulch, the quarrel and fight that separated them, his flight to San José, his wanderings to the mission of San Carmel, to the rancho of the Holy Fisherman. The record is complete!

Hop Sing. Alexandlee Molton —

Concho [*hurriedly returning to* HOP SING]. Yes! good John; yes, good John — go on. Alexander Morton —

Hop Sing. Alexandlee Molton. Me washee shirt, Alexandlee Molton; he no pay washee. Me washee flowty dozen hep — four bittie dozen — twenty dollar hep. Alexandlee Molton no payee. He say, "Go to hellee!" You pay me [*extending his hand*].

Concho. Car —! [*checking himself.*] *Poco tiempo*, John! In good time, John. Forty dollar — yes. Fifty dollar! To-morrow, John.

Hop Sing. Me no likee "to-mollow!" Me no likee "nex time, John!" Allee time Melican man say, "Chalkee up, John," "No smallee change, John," — umph. Plenty foolee me!

Concho. You shall have your money, John; but go now — you comprehend. *Carramba!* go! [*Pushes* HOP SING *to wing.*]

Hop Sing [*expostulating*]. Flowty dozen, hep, John! twenty dollar, John. Sabe. Flowty — twenty — [*gesticulating with fingers.*]

[*Exit* HOP SING, *pushed off by* CONCHO.

Concho. The pagan dolt! But he is important.

Ah, if he were wiser, I should not rid myself of him so quickly! And now for the schoolmistress, — the sweetheart of Sandy. If these men have not lied, he is in love with her; and, if he is, he has told her his secret before now; and she will be swift to urge him to his rights. If he has not told her — umph! [*laughing*] it will not be a *day* — an *hour* — before she will find out if her lover is Alexander Morton, the rich man's son, or "Sandy," the unknown vagabond. Eh, friend Sandy! It was a woman that locked up your secret: it shall be a woman, *Madre di Dios!* who shall unlock it. Ha! [*Goes to door of schoolhouse as door opens, and appears* COL. STARBOTTLE.]

Concho [*aside*]. A thousand devils! the lawyer of the old man Morton. [*Aloud.*] Pardon, pardon! I am a stranger. I have lost my way on the mountain. I am seeking a trail. *Señor*, pardon!

Starbottle [*aside*]. Another man seeking the road! Ged, I believe he's lying too. [*Aloud.*] It is before you, sir, *down*, — down the mountain.

Concho. A thousand thanks, *señor.* [*Aside.*] Perdition catch him! [*Aloud.*] Thanks, *señor.* [*Exit* R.

Starbottle. Ged, I've seen that face before. Ged, it's Castro's *major-domo.* Demn me, but I believe all his domestics have fallen in love with the pretty schoolma'am.

Enter MISS MARY *from schoolhouse.*

Miss Mary [*slowly refolding letter*]. You are aware, then, of the contents of this note; and you are the friend of Alexander Morton, sen.?

Col. Starbottle. Permit me a moment, a single moment, to — er — er — explain. I am Mr. Morton's legal adviser. There is — er — sense of — er — responsibility, — er — personal responsibility, about the term "friend," that at the — er — er — present moment I am not — er — prepared to assume. The substance of the letter is before you. I am here to — er — express its spirit. I am here [*with great gallantry*] to express the — er — yearnings of cousinly affection. I am aware — er — that *our* conduct, — if I may use the — er — the plural of advocacy, — I am aware that — er — *our* conduct has not in the past years been of — er — er — exemplary character. I am aware that the — er — death of our lamented cousin, your sainted mother, was — er — hastened — I may — er — say — pre — cip — itated — by our — er — indiscretion. But we are here to — er — confess judgment — with — er — er —costs.

Miss Mary [*interrupting*]. In other words, your client my cousin, having ruined my father, having turned his own widowed relation out of doors, and sent me, her daughter, among strangers to earn her bread; having seen my mother sink and die in her struggle to keep her family from want, — this man now seeks to condone his offences — pardon me, sir, if I use your own legal phraseology — by offering me a home; by giving me part of his ill-gotten wealth, the association of his own hypocritical self, and the company of his shameless, profligate son —

Starbottle [*interrupting*]. A moment, Miss Morris, — a single moment! The epithets you have used, the

— er — vigorous characterization of our — er — conduct, is — er — within the — er — strict rules of legal advocacy, correct. We are — er — rascals! we are — er — scoundrels! we are — er — well, I am not — er — prepared to say that we are not — er — demn me — hypocrites! But the young man you speak of — our son, whose past life (speaking as Col. Starbottle) no one more sincerely deprecates than myself, — that young man has reformed; has been for the past few months a miracle of sobriety, decorum, and industry; has taken, thanks to the example of — er — friends, a position of integrity in his father's business, of filial obedience in his father's household; is, in short, a paragon; and, demn me, I doubt if he's his father's son.

Miss Mary. Enough, sir! You are waiting for my answer. There is no reason why it should not be as precise, as brief, and as formal as your message. Go to my cousin; say that you saw the person he claims as his relation; say that you found her, a poor schoolmistress, in a rude mining-camp, dependent for her bread on the scant earnings of already impoverished men, dependent for her honor on the rude chivalry of outcasts and vagabonds; and say that then and there she repudiated your kinship, and respectfully declined your invitation.

Starbottle [*aside*]. Ged! Star! this is the — er — female of your species! This is the woman — the — er — one woman — for whom you are responsible sir! — personally responsible!

Miss Mary [*coldly*]. You have my answer, sir.

Col. Starbottle. Permit me — er — single moment, — a single moment! Between the — er — present moment, and that of my departure — there is an — er — interval of twelve hours. May I, at the close of that interval — again present myself — without prejudice, for your final answer?

Miss Mary [*indifferently*]. As you will, sir. I shall be here.

Col. Starbottle. Permit me. [*Takes her hand gallantly.*] Your conduct and manner, Miss Morris, remind me — er — singularly — of — er — beautiful creature — one of the — er — first families. [*Observing* MISS MARY *regarding him amusedly, becomes embarrassed.*] That is — er — I mean — er — er — good morning, Miss Morris! [*Passes by schoolhouse door retreating and bowing, and picks up flowers from door-step.*] Good morning!

Miss Mary. Excuse me, Col. Starbottle [*with winning politeness*], but I fear I must rob you of those flowers. I recognize them now as the offering of one of my pupils. I fear I must revoke my gift [*taking flowers from astonished colonel's hand*], all except a single one for your buttonhole. Have you any choice, or shall I [*archly*] choose for you? Then it shall be this. [*Begins to place flowers in buttonhole,* COL. STARBOTTLE *exhibiting extravagant gratitude in dumb show. Business prolonged through* MISS MARY'S *speech.*] If I am not wrong, colonel, the gentleman to whom you so kindly pointed out the road this morning was not a stranger to you. Ah! I am right. There, — one moment, — a sprig of green, a single

leaf, would set off the pink nicely. Here he is known only as "Sandy:" you know the absurd habits of this camp. Of course he has another name. There! [*releasing the colonel*] it is much prettier now.

Col. Starbottle. Ged, madam! The rarest exotic — the Victoria Regina — is not as — er — graceful — er — tribute!

Miss Mary. And yet you refuse to satisfy my curiosity?

Col. Starbottle [*with great embarrassment, which at last resolves itself into increased dignity of manner*]. What you ask is — er — er — impossible! You are right: the — er — gentleman you allude to is known to me under — er — er — another name. But honor — Miss Morris, honor! — seals the lips of Col. Starbottle. [*Aside.*] If she should know he was a menial! No! The position of the man you have challenged, Star, must be equal to your own. [*Aloud.*] Any thing, Miss Morris, but — er — that!

Miss Mary [*smiling*]. Be it so. *Adios*, Col. Starbottle.

Col. Starbottle [*gallantly*]. *Au revoir*, Miss Morris.

[*Exit, impressively, left.*

Miss Mary. So! Sandy conceals another name, which he withholds from Red Gulch. Well! Pshaw! What is that to me? The camp is made up of refugees, — men who perhaps have good reason to hide a name that may be infamous, the name that would publish a crime. Nonsense! Crime and Sandy! No! shame and guilt do not hide themselves in those honest but occasionally somewhat bloodshot eyes

Besides, goodness knows! the poor fellow's weakness is palpable enough, No, that is not the reason. It is no guilt that keeps his name hidden, — at least, not his. [*Seating herself, and arranging flowers in her lap.*] Poor Sandy! he must have climbed the eastern summit to get this. See, the rosy sunrise still lingers in its very petals; the dew is fresh upon it. Dear little mountain baby! I really believe that fellow got up before daylight, to climb that giddy height and secure its virgin freshness. And to think, in a moment of spite, I'd have given it to that bombastic warrior! [*Pause.*] That was a fine offer you refused just now, Miss Mary. Think of it: a home of luxury, a position of assured respect and homage; the life I once led, with all its difficulties smoothed away, its uncertainty dispelled, — think of it! My poor mother's dream fulfilled, — I, her daughter, the mistress of affluence, the queen of social power! What a temptation! Ah, Miss Mary, *was* it a temptation? Was there nothing in your free life here that stiffened your courage, that steeled the adamant of your refusal? or was it only the memory of your mother's wrongs? Luxury and wealth! Could you command a dwelling more charming than this? Position and respect! Is not the awful admiration of these lawless men more fascinating than the perilous flattery of gentlemen like Col. Starbottle? is not the devotion of these outcasts more complimentary than the lip-service of perfumed gallantry? [*Pause.*] It's very odd he doesn't come. I wonder if that conceited old fool said any thing to him. [*Rises, and then seats herself*

smiling.] He *has* come. He is dodging in and out of the manganita bushes below the spring. I suppose he imagines my visitor still here. The bashful fool! If anybody should see him, it would be enough to make a petty scandal! I'll give him a talking-to. [*Pause.*] I wonder if the ridiculous fool has gone to sleep in those bushes. [*Rises.*] Well, let him: it will help him to recover his senses from last night's dissipation; and you, Miss Mary, it is high time you were preparing the lessons for to-morrow. [*Goes to schoolhouse, enters door, and slams it behind her; after a moment re-appears with empty bucket.*] Of course there's no water, and I am dying of thirst. [*Goes slowly to left, and pauses embarrassedly and bashfully, presently laughs, — then suddenly frowns, and assumes an appearance of indignation.*] Miss Mary Morris, have you become such an egregious fool that you dare not satisfy the ordinary cravings of human nature, just because an idle, dissipated, bashful blockhead — nonsense! [*Exit, brandishing pail.*

SCENE 3. — *The Same.*

[*A pause.* SANDY'S *voice, without.*] This way, miss: the trail is easier.

[MISS MARY'S *voice, without.*] Never mind me look after the bucket.

Enter SANDY, *carrying bucket with water, followed by* MISS MARY. SANDY *sets bucket down.*

Miss Mary. There, you've spilt half of it. If it had been whiskey, you'd have been more careful.

Sandy [*submissively*]. Yes, miss.

Miss Mary [*aside*]. "Yes, miss!" The man will drive me crazy with his saccharine imbecility. [*Aloud.*] I believe you would assent to any thing, even if I said you were — an impostor!

Sandy [*amazedly*]. An impostor, Miss Mary?

Miss Mary. Well, I don't know what other term you use in Red Gulch to express a man who conceals his real name under another.

Sandy [*embarrassed, but facing* MISS MARY]. Has anybody been tellin' ye I was an impostor, miss? Has that derned old fool that I saw ye with —

Miss Mary. "That old fool," as you call him, was too honorable a gentleman to disclose your secret, and too loyal a friend to traduce you by an epithet. Fear nothing, Mr. "Sandy:" if you have limited your confidence to *one* friend, it has not been misplaced. But, dear me, don't think *I* wish to penetrate your secret. No. The little I learned was accidental. Besides, his business was with me: perhaps, as his friend, you already know it.

Sandy [*meekly*]. Perhaps, miss, he was too honorable a gentleman to disclose *your* secret. His business was with me.

Miss Mary [*aside*]. He has taken a leaf out of my book! He is not so stupid, after all. [*Aloud.*] *I* have no secret. Col. Starbottle came here to make me an offer.

Sandy [*recoiling*]. An offer!

Miss Mary. Of a home and independence. [*Aside.*] Poor fellow! how pale he looks! [*Aloud.*] Well

you see, I am more trustful than you. I will tell you *my* secret; and you shall aid me with your counsel. [*They sit on ledge of rocks.*] Listen! My mother had a cousin once, — a cousin cruel, cowardly, selfish, and dissolute. She loved him, as women are apt to love such men, — loved him so that she beguiled her own husband to trust his fortunes in the hands of this wretched profligate. The husband was ruined, disgraced. The wife sought her cousin for help for her necessities. He met her with insult, and proposed that she should fly with him.

Sandy. One moment, miss: it wasn't his pardner, — his pardner's wife — eh?

Miss Mary [*impatiently*]. It was the helpless wife of his own blood, I tell you. The husband died broken-hearted. The wife, my mother, struggled in poverty, under the shadow of a proud name, to give me an education, and died while I was still a girl. To-day this cousin, — this more than murderer of my parents, — old, rich, self-satisfied, *reformed*, invites me, by virtue of that kinship he violated and despised, to his home, his wealth, his — his family roof-tree! The man you saw was his agent.

Sandy. And you —

Miss Mary. Refused.

Sandy [*passing his hand over his forehead*]. You did wrong, Miss Mary.

Miss Mary. Wrong, sir? [*Rising.*]

Sandy [*humbly but firmly*]. Sit ye down, Miss Mary. It ain't for ye to throw your bright young life away yer in this place. It ain't for such as ye to soil

your fair young hands by raking in the ashes to stir up the dead embers of a family wrong. It ain't for ye — ye'll pardon me, Miss Mary, for sayin' it — it ain't for ye to allow when it's *too late* fur a man to reform, or to go back of his reformation. Don't ye do it, miss, fur God's sake, — don't ye do it! Harkin, Miss Mary. If ye'll take my advice — a fool's advice, maybe — ye'll go. And when I tell ye that that advice, if ye take it, will take the sunshine out of these hills, the color off them trees, the freshness outer them flowers, the heart's blood outer me, — ye'll know that I ain't thinkin' o' myself, but of ye. And I wouldn't say this much to ye, Miss Mary, but you're goin' away. There's a flower, miss, you're wearin' in your bosom, — a flower I picked at daybreak this morning, five miles away in the snow. The wind was blowing chill around it, so that my hands that dug for it were stiff and cold; but the roots were warm, Miss Mary, as they are now in your bosom. Ye'll keep that flower, Miss Mary, in remembrance of my love for ye, that kept warm and blossomed through the snow. And, don't start, Miss Mary, — for ye'll leave behind ye, as I did, the snow and rocks through which it bloomed. I axes your parding, miss: I'm hurtin' yer feelin's, sure.

Miss Mary [*rising with agitation*]. Nothing, — nothing; but climbing these stupid rocks has made me giddy: that's all. Your arm. [*To* SANDY *impatiently.*] Can't you give me your arm? [SANDY *supports* MISS MARY *awkwardly toward schoolhouse. At door* MISS MARY *pauses.*] But if this reformation is

so easy, so acceptable, why have you not profited by it? Why have you not reformed? Why have I found you here, a disgraced, dissipated, anonymous outcast, whom an honest girl dare not know? Why do you presume to preach to me? Have you a father?

Sandy. Hush, Miss Mary, hush! I had a father. Harkin. All that you have suffered from a kinship even so far removed, I have known from the hands of one who should have protected me. *My* father was — but no matter. You, Miss Mary, came out of your trials like gold from the washing. I was only the dirt and gravel to be thrown away. It is too late, Miss Mary, too late. My father has never sought me, would turn me from his doors had I sought him. Perhaps he is only right.

Miss Mary. But why should he be so different from others? Listen. This very cousin whose offer I refused had a son, — wild, wayward, by all report the most degraded of men. It was part of my cousin's reformation to save this son, and, if it were possible, snatch him from that terrible fate which seemed to be his only inheritance.

Sandy [*eagerly*]. Yes, miss.

Miss Mary. To restore him to a regenerated home. With this idea he followed his prodigal to California. I, you understand, was only an after-thought consequent upon his success. He came to California upon this pilgrimage two years ago. He had no recollection, so they tell me, by which he could recognize this erring son; and at first his search was wild, profitless,

and almost hopeless. But by degrees, and with a persistency that seemed to increase with his hopelessness, he was rewarded by finding some clew to him at — at — at —

Sandy [*excitedly*]. At Poker Flat?

Miss Mary. Ah, perhaps you know the story, — at Poker Flat. He traced him to the Mission of San Carmel.

Sandy. Yes, miss: go on.

Miss Mary. He was more successful than he deserved, perhaps. He found him. I see you know the story.

Sandy. Found him! Found him! Miss, did you say found him?

Miss Mary. Yes, found him. And to-day Alexander Morton, the reclaimed prodigal, is part of the household I am invited to join. So you see, Mr. Sandy, there is still hope. What has happened to him is only a promise to you. Eh! Mr. Sandy — what is the matter? Are you ill? Your exertion this morning, perhaps. Speak to me! Gracious heavens, he is going mad! No! No! Yes — it cannot be — it is — he *has* broken his promise: he is drunk again.

Sandy [*rising, excited and confused*]. Excuse me, miss, I am a little onsartain *here* [*pointing to his head*]. I can't — I disremember — what you said jus' now: ye mentioned the name o' that prodigal that was found.

Miss Mary. Certainly: compose yourself, — my cousin's son, Alexander Morton. Listen, Sandy

you promised *me*, you know, you said for *my* sake you would not touch a drop. [*Enter cautiously toward schoolhouse the* DUCHESS, *stops on observing* SANDY, *and hides behind rock.*]

Sandy [*still bewildered and incoherent*]. I reckon. Harkin, miss, is that thar thing [*pointing towards rock where* DUCHESS *is concealed*] — is that a tree, or — or — a woman? Is it sorter movin' this way?

Miss Mary [*laying her hand on* SANDY'S]. Recover your senses, for Heaven's sake, Sandy, — for *my* sake! It is only a tree.

Sandy [*rising*]. Then, miss, I've broke my word with ye: I'm drunk. P'r'aps I'd better be a-goin' [*looking round confusedly*] till I'm sober. [*Going toward* L.]

Miss Mary [*seizing his hand*]. But you'll see me again, Sandy: you'll come here — before — before — I go?

Sandy. Yes, miss, — before ye go. [*Staggers stupidly toward* L. *Aside.*] Found him! found Alexander Morton! It's a third time, Sandy, the third time: it means — it means — you're mad! [*Laughs wildly, and exit* L.]

Miss Mary [*springing to her feet*]. There is a mystery behind all this, Mary Morris, that you — you — must discover. That man was *not* drunk: he *had not* broken his promise to me. What does it all mean? I have it. I will accept the offer of this Alexander Morton. I will tell him the story of this helpless man, this poor, poor, reckless Sandy. With the story of his own son before his eyes, he cannot

but interest himself in his fate. He is rich: he will aid me in my search for Sandy's father, for Sandy's secret. At the worst, I can only follow the advice of this wretched man, — an advice so generous, so kind, so self-sacrificing. Ah —

SCENE 4. — *The same. Enter the* DUCHESS, *showily and extravagantly dressed. Her manner at first is a mixture of alternate shyness and bravado.*

The Duchess. I heerd tell that you was goin' down to 'Frisco to-morrow, for your vacation; and I couldn't let ye go till I came to thank ye for your kindness to my boy, — little Tommy.

Miss Mary [*aside. Rising abstractedly, and recalling herself with an effort.*] I see, — a poor outcast, the mother of my anonymous pupil. [*Aloud.*] Tommy! a good boy, — a dear, good little boy.

Duchess. Thankee, miss, thankee. If I am his mother, thar ain't a sweeter, dearer, better boy lives than him. And, if I ain't much as says it, thar ain't a sweeter, dearer, angeler teacher than he's got. It ain't for you to be complimented by me, miss; it ain't for such as me to be comin' here in broad day to do it, neither; but I come to ask a favor, — not for me, miss, but for the darling boy.

Miss Mary [*aside — abstractedly*]. This poor, degraded creature will kill me with her wearying gratitude. Sandy will not return, of course, while she is here. [*Aloud.*] Go on. If I can help you or yours, be assured I will.

The Duchess. Thankee, miss. You see, thar's no one the boy has any claim on but me, and I ain't the proper person to bring him up. I did allow to send him to 'Frisco, last year; but when I heerd talk that a schoolma'am was comin' up, and you did, and he sorter tuk to ye natril from the first, I guess I did well to keep him yer. For, oh, miss, he loves ye so much; and, if you could hear him talk in his purty way, ye wouldn't refuse him any thing.

Miss Mary [*with fatigued politeness, and increasing impatience.*] I see, I see: pray go on.

The Duchess [*with quiet persistency*]. It's natril he should take to ye, miss; for his father, when I first knowed him, miss, was a gentleman like yourself; and the boy must forget me sooner or later — and I ain't goin' to cry about *that.*

Miss Mary [*impatiently*]. Pray tell me how I can serve you.

The Duchess. Yes, miss; you see, I came to ask you to take my Tommy, — God bless him for the sweetest, bestest boy that lives! — to take him with you. I've money plenty; and it's all yours and his. Put him in some good school, whar ye kin go and see, and sorter help him to — forget — his mother. Do with him what you like. The worst you can do will be kindness to what he would learn with me. You will: I know you will; won't you? You will make him as pure and as good as yourself; and when he has grown up, and is a gentleman, you will tell him his father's name, — the name that hasn't passed my lips for years, — the name of Alexander Morton.

Miss Mary [*aside*]. Alexander Morton! The prodigal! Ah, I see,—the ungathered husks of his idle harvest.

The Duchess. You hesitate, Miss Mary. [*Seizing her.*] Do not take your hand away. You are smiling. God bless you! I know you will take my boy. Speak to me, Miss Mary.

Miss Mary [*aloud*]. I will take your child. More than that, I will take him to his father.

The Duchess. No, no! for God's sake, no, Miss Mary! He has never seen him from his birth: he does not know him. He will disown him. He will curse him,—will curse me!

Miss Mary. Why should he? Surely his crime is worse than yours.

The Duchess. Hear me, Miss Mary. [*Aside.*] How can I tell her? [*Aloud.*] One moment, miss. I was once—ye may not believe it, miss—as good, as pure, as you. I had a husband, the father of this child. He was kind, good, easy, forgiving,—too good for me, miss, too simple and unsuspecting. He was what the world calls a fool, miss: he loved me too well,—the kind o' crime, miss,—beggin' your pardon, and all precepts to the contrairy,—the one thing that women like me never forgives. He had a pardner, miss, that governed him as *he* never governed me; that held him with the stronger will, and maybe *me* too. I was young, miss,—no older than yourself then; and I ran away with him,—left all, and ran away with my husband's pardner. My husband—nat'rally—took to drink. I axes your par-

din', miss; but ye'll see now, allowin' your larnin', that Alexander Morton ain't the man as will take my child.

Miss Mary. Nonsense. You are wrong. He has reformed; he has been restored to his home, — your child's home, your home if you will but claim it. Do not fear: I will make that right.

Enter SANDY *slowly and sheepishly,* R.; *stops on observing the* DUCHESS, *and stands amazed and motionless.*

Miss Mary [*observing* SANDY — *aside*]. He *has* returned. Poor fellow! How shall I get rid of this woman? [*Aloud.*] Enough. If you are sincere, I will take your child, and, God help me! bring him to his home and yours. Are you satisfied?

The Duchess. Thank ye! Thank ye, miss; but — but thar's a mistake somewhar. In course — it's natural — ye don't know the father of that child, my boy Tommy, under the name o' Alexander Morton. Ye're thinking, like as not, of another man. The man I mean lives yer, in this camp: they calls him Sandy, miss, — *Sandy!*

Miss Mary [*after a pause, coming forward passionately*]. Hush! I have given you my answer, be it Alexander Morton or Sandy. Go now: bring me the child this evening at my house. I will meet you there. [*Leads the* DUCHESS *to wing. The* DUCHESS *endeavors to fall at her feet.*]

Duchess. God bless you, miss!

Miss Mary [*hurriedly embracing her.*] No more, no more — but go! [*Exit* DUCHESS. MISS MARY *returns hurriedly to centre, confronting* SANDY.]

Miss Mary [*to* SANDY, *hurriedly and excitedly.*] You have heard what that woman said. I do not ask you under what *alias* you are known here: I only ask a single question, — Is *she* your wife? are you the father of her child?

Sandy [*sinking upon his knees before her, and covering his face with his hands*]. I am!

Miss Mary. Enough! [*Taking flower from her bosom.*] Here, I give you back the flower you gave me this morning. It has faded and died here upon my breast. But I shall replace it with your foundling, — the child of that woman, born like that flower in the snow! And I go now, Sandy, and leave behind me, as you said this morning, the snow and rocks in which it bloomed. Good-by! Farewell, farewell — forever! [*Goes toward schoolhouse as* —

Enter COL. STARBOTTLE.

Miss Mary [*to* STARBOTTLE.] You are here in season, sir. You must have come for an answer to your question. You must first give me one to mine. Who is this man [*pointing to* SANDY], the man you met upon the rocks this morning?

Col. Starbottle. Ahem! I am — er — now fully prepared and responsible, I may say, miss — er — personally responsible, to answer that question. When you asked it this morning, the ordinary courtesy of the — er — code of honor threw a — er — cloak around the — er — antecedents of the — er — man whom I had — er — elected by a demand for personal satisfaction, to the equality of myself, an — er — gentleman! That — er

— cloak is now removed. I have waited six hours for an apology or a — er — reply to my demand. I am now free to confess that the — er — person you allude to was first known by me, three months ago, as an inebriated menial, — a groom in the household of my friend Don José Castro, — by the — er — simple name of "Diego."

Miss Mary [*slowly*]. I am satisfied. I accept my cousin's invitation.

[*Exit slowly, supported by* COL. STARBOTTLE, R.

As STARBOTTLE *and* MISS MARY *exeunt* R., CONCHO *and* HOP SING *enter cautiously*, L. SANDY *slowly rises to his feet, passes his hand across his forehead, looks around toward exit of* STARBOTTLE *and* MISS MARY.

SANDY [*slowly, but with more calmness of demeanor*]. Gone, gone — forever! No: I am not mad, nor crazed with drink. My hands no longer tremble. There is no confusion here. [*Feeling his forehead.*] I heard them all. It was no dream. I heard her every word. Alexander Morton, yes, they spoke of Alexander Morton. She is going to him, to my father. She is going — she, Mary, my cousin — she is going to my father. He has been seeking me — has found — ah! [*Groans.*] No, no, Sandy! Be patient, be calm: you are not crazy — no, no, good Sandy, good old boy! Be patient, be patient: it is coming, it is coming. Yes, I see: some one has leaped into my place; some one has leaped into the old man's arms. Some one will creep into *her* heart! No! by

God! No! I am Alexander Morton. Yes, yes! But how, how shall I prove it? — how? Who [CONCHO *steps cautiously forward towards* SANDY *unobserved*] will believe the vagabond, the outcast — my God! — the crazy drunkard?

Concho [*advancing, and laying his hand on* SANDY]. I will!

Sandy [*staggering back amazedly*]. You!

Concho. Yes, — I, I, — Concho! You know me, Diego, you know me, — Concho, the *major-domo* of the Blessed Innocents. Ha! You know me now. Yes, I have come to save you. I have come to make you strong. So — I have come to help you strip the Judas that has stepped into your place, — the sham prodigal that has had the fatted calf and the ring, — ah! ah!

Sandy. You? You do not know me!

Concho. Ah! you think, you think, eh? Listen: Since you left I have tracked *him — the impostor*, this Judas, this coyote — step by step, until his tracks crossed yours; and then I sought you out. I know all. I found a letter you had dropped; that brought me to Poker Flat. Ah, you start! I have seen those who knew you as Alexander Morton. You see! Ah, I am wise.

Sandy [*aside*]. It is true. [*Aloud.*] But [*suspiciously*] why have you done this? You, Concho? — you were not my friend.

Concho. No, but *he* is my enemy. Ah, you start! Look at me, Alexander Morton, Sandy, Diego! You knew a man, strong, active, like yourself. Eh! Look

at me now! Look at me, a cripple! Eh! lame and crushed here [*pointing to his leg*], broken and crushed here [*pointing to his heart*], by him, — the impostor! Listen, Diego. The night I was sent to track you from the rancho, he — this man — struck me from the wall, dashed me to the earth, and made *my body*, broken and bruised, a stepping-stone to leap the wall into your place, Diego, — into your father's heart, — into my master's home. They found me dead, they thought, — no, not dead, Diego! It was sad, they said, — unfortunate. They nursed me; they talked of money — eh, Diego! — money! They would have pensioned me to hush scandal — eh! I was a dog, a foreigner, a Greaser! Eh! That is why I am here. No! I love you not, Diego; you are of his race; but I hate — Mother of God! — I *hate* him!

Sandy [*rising to his feet, aside*]. Good! I begin to feel my courage return: my nerves are stronger. Courage, Sandy! [*Aloud.*] Be it so, Concho: there is my hand! We will help each other, — you to my birthright, I to your revenge! Hark ye! [SANDY'S *manner becomes more calm and serious.*] This impostor is *no* craven, *no coyote*. Whoever he is, he must be strong. He has most plausible evidences. We must have rigid proofs. I will go with you to Poker Flat. There is one man, if he be living, knows me better than any man who lives. He has done me wrong, — a great wrong, Concho, — but I will forgive him. I will do more, — I will ask his forgiveness. He will be a witness no man dare gainsay — my partner — God help him and forgive him as I do! — John Oakhurst.

Concho. Oakhurst your partner!

Sandy [*angrily*]. Yes. Look ye, Concho, he has wronged me in a private way: that is *my* business, not *yours;* but he was *my* partner, no one shall abuse him before me.

Concho. Be it so. Then sink here! Rot here! Go back to your husks, O prodigal! wallow in the ditches of this camp, and see your birthright sold for a dram of *aguardiente!* Lie here, dog and coyote that you are, with your mistress under the protection of your destroyer! For I tell you — I, Concho, the cripple — that the man who struck me down, the man who stepped into your birthright, the man who to-morrow welcomes your sweetheart in his arms, who holds the custody of your child, is your partner, — John Oakhurst!

Sandy [*who has been sinking under* CONCHO'S *words, rising convulsively to his feet*]. God be merciful to me a sinner! [*Faints.*]

Concho [*standing over his prostrate body exultingly*]. I am right. You are wise, Concho, you are wise! You have found Alexander Morton!

Hop Sing [*advancing slowly to* SANDY'S *side, and extending open palm*]. Me washee shirt flo you, flowty dozen hab. You no payee me. Me wantee twenty dollar hep. Sabe!

[*Curtain.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE 1. — *The bank parlor of Morton & Son, San Francisco. Room richly furnished; two square library desks, left and right. At right, safe in wall; at left, same with practicable doors. Folding-door in flat* C., *leading to counting-room. Door in left to private room of Alexander Morton, sen.; door in right to private room of Morton, jun.* ALEXANDER MORTON, *sen., discovered at desk* R., *opening and reading letters.*

Morton, sen. [*laying down letter*]. Well, well, the usual story; letters from all sorts of people, who have done or intend to do all sorts of things for my reclaimed prodigal. [*Reads.*] "Dear Sir: five years ago I loaned some money to a stranger who answers the description of your recovered son. He will remember Jim Parker, — Limping Jim, of Poker Flat. Being at present short of funds, please send twenty dollars, amount loaned, by return mail. If not convenient, five dollars will do as instalment." Pshaw! [*Throws letter aside, and takes up another.*] "Dear Sir: I invite your attention to enclosed circular for a proposed Home for Dissipated and Anonymous Gold-Miners. Your well-known reputation for liberality, and your late valuable experience in the reformation of your son, will naturally enlist your broadest sympathies. We enclose a draft for five thousand dollars, for your signature.'

We shall see! Another: "Dear Sir: the Society for the Formation of Bible Classes in the Upper Stanislaus acknowledge your recent munificent gift of five hundred dollars to the cause. Last sabbath Brother Hawkins of Poker Flat related with touching effect the story of your prodigal to an assemblage of over two hundred miners. Owing to unusual expenses, we regret to be compelled to draw upon you for five hundred dollars more." So! [*Putting down letter.*] If we were given to pride and vain glory, we might well be puffed up with the fame of our works and the contagion of our example: yet I fear that, with the worldly-minded, this praise of charity to others is only the prayerful expectation of some personal application to the praiser. [*Rings hand-bell.*]

Enter JACKSON.

[*To* JACKSON.] File these letters [*handing letters*] with the others. There is no answer. Has young Mr. Alexander come in yet?

Jackson. He only left here an hour ago. It was steamer day yesterday: he was up all night, sir.

Old Morton [*aside*]. True. And the night before he travelled all night, riding two hours ahead of one of our defaulting agents, and saved the bank a hundred thousand dollars. Certainly his devotion to business is unremitting. [*Aloud.*] Any news from Col. Starbottle?

Jackson. He left this note, sir, early this morning.

Old Morton [*takes it, and reads*]. "I think I may say, on my own personal responsibility, that the mis-

sion is successful. Miss Morris will arrive to-night with a female attendant and child." [*To* JACKSON.] That is all, sir. Stop! Has any one been smoking here?

Jackson. Not to my knowledge, sir.

Old Morton. There was a flavor of stale tobacco-smoke in the room this morning when I entered, and ashes on the carpet. I *know* that young Mr. Alexander has abandoned the pernicious habit. See that it does not occur again.

Jackson. Yes, sir. [*Aside.*] I must warn Mr. Alexander that his friends must be more careful; and yet those ashes were good for a deposit of fifty thousand.

Old Morton. Is any one waiting?

Jackson. Yes, sir, — Don José Castro and Mr. Capper.

Old Morton. Show in the Don: the policeman can wait.

Jackson. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Old Morton [*taking up* STARBOTTLE'S *note*]. "Miss Morris will arrive to-night." And yet he saw her only yesterday. This is not like her mother: no. She would never have forgiven and forgotten so quickly. Perhaps she knew not my sin and her mother's wrongs; perhaps she has — has — *Christian* forgiveness [*sarcastically*]; perhaps, like my prodigal, she will be immaculately perfect. Well, well: at least her presence will make my home less lonely. "An attendant and child." A child! Ah, if *he*, my boy, my Alexander, were still a child, I might warm

this cold, cold heart in his sunshine! Strange that I cannot reconstruct from this dutiful, submissive, obedient, industrious Alexander, — this redeemed outcast, this son who shares my life, my fortunes, my heart, — the foolish, wilful, thoughtless, idle boy, that once defied me. I remember [*musing, with a smile*] how the little rascal, ha, ha! once struck me, — *struck me!* — when I corrected him: ha, ha! [*Rubbing his hands with amusement, and then suddenly becoming grave and lugubrious.*] No, no. These are the whisperings of the flesh. Why should I find fault with him for being all that a righteous conversion demands, — all that I asked and prayed for? No, Alexander Morton: it is you, *you*, who are not yet regenerate. It is *you* who are ungrateful to Him who blessed you, to Him whose guiding hand led you to —

Enter JACKSON.

Jackson. Don José Castro.

Enter DON JOSÉ.

Don José. A thousand pardons, *señor*, for interrupting you in the hours of business; but it is — it is of business I would speak. [*Looking around.*]

Old Morton [*to* JACKSON]. You can retire. [*Exit* JACKSON.] Be seated, Mr. Castro: I am at your service.

Don José. It is of your — your son —

Old Morton. Our firm is Morton & Son: in business we are one, Mr. Castro.

Don Jose. *Bueno!* Then to you as to him I will

speak. Here is a letter I received yesterday. It has significance, importance perhaps. But, whatever it is, it is something for you, not me, to know. If I am wronged much, Don Alexandro, *you*, you, are wronged still more. Shall I read it? Good. [*Reads.*] "The man to whom you have affianced your daughter is not the son of Alexander Morton. Have a care. If I do not prove him an impostor at the end of six days, believe me one, and not your true friend and servant, Concho." In six days, Don Alexandro, the year of probation is over, and I have promised my daughter's hand to your son. [*Hands letter to* MORTON.]

Old Morton [*ringing bell.*] Is that all, Mr. Castro?

Don José. All, Mr. Castro? *Carramba!* is it not enough?

Enter JACKSON.

Old Morton [*to* JACKSON]. You have kept a record of this business during the last eighteen months. Look at this letter. [*Handing letter.*] Is the handwriting familiar?

Jackson [*taking letter.*] Can't say, sir. The form is the old one.

Old Morton. How many such letters have you received?

Jackson. Four hundred and forty-one, sir. This is the four hundred and forty-second application for your son's position, sir.

Don José. Pardon. This is not an application: it is only information or caution.

Old Morton [*to* JACKSON.] How many letters of information or caution have we received?

Jackson. This makes seven hundred and eighty-one, sir.

Old Morton. How, sir! [*Quickly.*] There were but seven hundred and seventy-nine last night.

Jackson. Beg pardon, sir! The gentleman who carried Mr. Alexander's valise from the boat was the seven hundred and eightieth.

Old Morton. Explain yourself, sir.

Jackson. He imparted to me, while receiving his stipend, the fact that he did not believe young Mr. Alexander was your son. An hour later, sir, he also imparted to me confidentially that he believed you were his father, and requested the loan of five dollars, to be repaid by you, to enable him to purchase a clean shirt, and appear before you in respectable condition. He waited for you an hour, and expressed some indignation that he had not an equal show with others, to throw himself into your arms.

Don José [*rising, aside, and uplifting his hands.*] *Carramba!* These Americaños are of the Devil! [*Aloud.*] Enough, Don Alexandro! Then you think this letter is only worth —

Old Morton. One moment. I can perhaps tell you exactly its market value. [*To* JACKSON.] Go on, sir.

Jackson. At half-past ten, sir, then being slightly under the influence of liquor, he accepted the price of a deck passage to Stockton.

Old Morton. How much was that, sir?

Jackson. Fifty cents.

Old Morton. Exactly so! There you have, sir [*to* DON JOSÉ], the market value of the information you

have received. I would advise you, as a business matter, not to pay more. As a business matter, you can at any time draw upon us for the amount. [*To* JACKSON.] Admit Mr. Capper. [*Exit* JACKSON.]

Don José [*rising with dignity.*] This is an insult, Don Alexandro.

Old Morton. You are wrong, Mr. Castro: it is *business;* sought, I believe, by yourself. Now that it is transacted, I beg you to dine with me to-morrow to meet my niece. No offence, sir, no offence. Come, come! Business, you know, business.

Don José [*relaxing*]. Be it so! I will come. [*Aside.*] These Americaños, these Americaños, are of the Devil! [*Aloud.*] *Adios.* [*Going.*] I hear, by report, that you have met with the misfortune of a serious loss by robbery?

Old Morton [*aside*]. So our mishap is known everywhere! [*Aloud.*] No serious misfortune, Mr. Castro, even if we do not recover the money. *Adios.*

[*Exit* DON JOSÉ.

Old Morton. The stiff-necked Papist! That he should dare, for the sake of his black-browed, froward daughter, to question the faith on which I have pinned my future! Well, with God's blessing, I gave him some wholesome discipline. If it were not for my covenant with Alexander, — and nobly he has fulfilled his part, — I should forbid his alliance with the blood of this spying Jesuit.

Enter MR. JACKSON, *leading in* CAPPER.

Jackson. Policeman, sir. [*Exit*

Capper [*turning sharply*]. Who's that man?

Old Morton. Jackson, clerk.

Capper. Umph! Been here long?

Old Morton. A year. He was appointed by my son.

Capper. Know any thing of his previous life?

Old Morton [*stiffly*]. I have already told you he is an appointee of my son's.

Capper. Yes! [*Aside.*] "Like master, like man." [*Aloud.*] Well, to business. We have worked up the robbery. We have reached two conclusions, — one, that the work was not done by professionals; the other, consequent upon this, that you can't recover the money.

Old Morton. Excuse me, sir, but I do not see the last conclusion.

Capper. Then listen. The professional thief has only one or two ways of disposing of his plunder, and these ways are always well known to us. Good! Your stolen coin has not been disposed of in the regular way, through the usual hands which we could at any time seize. Of this we are satisfied.

Old Morton. How do you know it?

Capper. In this way. The only clew we have to the identification of the missing money were two boxes of Mexican doubloons.

Old Morton [*aside*]. Mr. Castro's special deposit! He may have reason for his interest. [*Aloud.*] Go on.

Capper. It is a coin rare in circulation in the interior. The night after the robbery, the dealer of a

monte-table in Sacramento paid out five thousand dollars in doubloons. He declared it was taken in at the table, and could not identify the players. Of course, *of course!* So far, you see, you are helpless. We have only established one fact, that the robber is — is — [*significantly*] a gambler.

Old Morton [*quietly*]. The regular trade of the thief seems to me to be of little importance if you cannot identify him, or recover my money. But go on, sir, go on: or is this all?

Capper [*aside*]. The old fool is blind. That is natural. [*Aloud.*] It is not all. The crime will doubtless be repeated. The man who has access to your vaults, who has taken only thirty thousand dollars when he could have secured half a million, — this man, who has already gambled that thirty thousand away, — will not stop there. He will in a day or two, perhaps to-day, try to retrieve his losses out of *your* capital. *I* am here to prevent it.

Old Morton [*becoming interested*]. How?

Capper. Give me, for forty-eight hours, free access to this building. Let me conceal myself somewhere, anywhere, within these walls. Let it be without the knowledge of your clerks, even of *your son!*

Old Morton [*proudly*]. Mr. Alexander Morton is absent to-day. There is no other reason why he should not be here to consent to the acts of his partner and father.

Capper [*quickly*]. Very good. It is only to insure absolute secrecy.

Old Morton [*aside*]. Another robbery might excite

a suspicion, worse for our credit than our actual loss. There is a significant earnestness about this man, that awakens my fears. If Alexander were only here! [*Aloud.*] I accept. [CAPPER *has been trying doors* R. *and* L.]

Capper What room is this? [*At* R.]

Old Morton. My son's: I would prefer —

Capper. And this? [*At* L.]

Old Morton. Mine, sir; if you choose —

Capper [*locking door, and putting key in his pocket*]. This will do. Oblige me by making the necessary arrangements in your counting-room.

Old Morton [*hesitating and aside*]. He is right: perhaps it is only prudence, and I am saving Alexander additional care and annoyance. [*Exit.*

Enter MR. SHADOW *cautiously*, C.

Shadow [*in a lisping whisper to* CAPPER]. I've got the litht of the clerkth complete.

Capper [*triumphantly*]. Put it in your pocket, Shadow. We don't care for the lackeys now: we are after the master.

Shadow. Eh! the mathter?

Capper. Yes: the master, — the young master, the reclaimed son, the reformed prodigal! ha, ha! — the young man who compensates himself for all this austere devotion to business and principle by dipping into the old man's vaults when he wants a *pasear:* eh, Shadow? That's the man we're after. Look here! *I* never took any stock in that young man's reformation. Ye don't teach old sports like him new

tricks. They're a bad lot, father and son, — eh, Shadow? — and he's a chip of the old block. I spotted him before this robbery, before we were ever called in here professionally. I've had my eye on Alexander Morton, *alias* John Oakhurst; and, when I found the old man's doubloons raked over a monte-table at Sacramento, I knew where to look for the thief. Eh, Shadow?

Shadow [*aside*]. He ith enormouth, thith Mithter Capper.

Enter OLD MORTON.

Old Morton. I have arranged every thing. You will not be disturbed or suspected here in my private office. Eh! [*Looking at* SHADOW.] Who has slipped in here?

Capper. Only my Shadow, Mr. Morton; but I can rid myself even of that. [*Crosses to* SHADOW.] Take this card to the office, and wait for further orders. Vanish, Shadow! [*Exit* SHADOW.

Enter JACKSON.

Jackson. Mr. Alexander has come in, sir. [OLD MORTON *and* CAPPER *start.*]

Old Morton. Where is he?

Jackson. In his private room, sir.

Old Morton. Enough: you can go. [*Exit* JACKSON.

Capper [*crossing to* MORTON]. Remember, you have given your pledge of secrecy. Beware! Your honor, your property, the credit and reputation of your bank, are at stake.

Old Morton [*after a pause of hesitation, with dignity*]. I gave you my word, sir, while my son was not pres-

ent. I shall save myself from breaking my word with you, or concealing any thing from him, by withdrawing myself. For the next twenty-four hours, this room [*pointing to private room* R.] is yours.

Each regards the other. Exit OLD MORTON C., *as* CAPPER *exit in private room* R. *After a pause, door of room* L. *opens, and* HARRY YORK *appears, slightly intoxicated, followed by* JOHN OAKHURST.

Harry York [*looking around*]. By Jove! Morton, but you've got things in style here. And this yer's the gov'nor's desk; and here old Praise God Barebones sits opposite ye. Look yer, old boy [*throwing himself in chair*], I kin allow how it comes easy for ye to run this bank, for it's about as exciting, these times, as faro was to ye in '49, when I first knew ye as Jack Oakhurst; but how the Devil you can sit opposite that stiff embodiment of all the Ten Commandments, day by day, damn it! that's wot *gets* me! Why, the first day I came here on business, the old man froze me so that I couldn't thaw a deposit out of my pocket. It chills me to think of it.

Oakhurst [*hastily*]. I suppose I am accustomed to him. But come, Harry: let me warm you. [*Opens door of safe* L., *and discovers cupboard, decanter, and glasses.*]

York [*laughing*]. By Jove! under the old man's very nose. Jack, this is like you. [*Takes a drink.*] Well, old boy, this is like old times. But you don't drink?

Oakhurst. No, nor smoke. The fact is, Harry,

I've taken a year's pledge. I've six days still to run; after that [*gloomily*], why [*with a reckless laugh*], I shall be Jack Oakhurst again.

York. Lord! to think of your turning out to be anybody's son, Jack! — least of all, *his!* [*Pointing to chair.*]

Oakhurst [*laughing recklessly*]. Not more strange than that I should find Harry York, the spendthrift of Poker Flat, the rich and respected Mr. York, produce-merchant of San Francisco.

York. Yes; but, my boy, you see I didn't strike it — in a rich father. I gave up gambling, married, and settled down, saved my money, invested a little here and there, and — worked for it, Jack, damn me, — worked for it like a damned horse!

Oakhurst [*aside*]. True, this is not work.

York. But that ain't my business with ye now, old boy: it's this. You've had some trials and troubles in the bank lately, — a defalcation of agents one day, a robbery next. It's luck, my boy, luck! but ye know people will talk. You don't mind my sayin' that there's rumors 'round. The old man's mighty unpopular because he's a saint; and folks don't entirely fancy you because you used to be the reverse. Well, Jack, it amounts to 'bout this: I've withdrawn my account from Parkinson's, in Sacramento, and I've got a pretty heavy balance on hand — nigh on two hundred thousand — in bonds and certificates here; and if it will help you over the rough places, old boy, as a deposit, yer it is [*drawing pocket-book*].

Oakhurst [*greatly affected, but endeavoring to conceal it*]. Thank you, Harry, old fellow — but —

York [*quickly*]. I know: I'll take the risk, a business risk. You'll stand by me all you can, old boy; you'll make it pay all you can; and if you lose it — why — all right!

Oakhurst [*embarrassed*]. As a deposit with Morton & Son, drawing two per cent monthly interest —

York. Damn Morton & Son! I'll back it with Jack Oakhurst, the man I know.

Oakhurst [*advancing slowly*]. I'll take it, Harry.

York [*extending his hand*]. It's a square game, Jack!

Oakhurst [*seizing his hand with repressed emotion*]. It's a square game, Harry York, if I live.

York. Then I'll travel. Good-night, old boy. I'll send my clerk around in the morning to put things right. Good-night [*going*].

Oakhurst [*grasping* YORK'S *hand*]. One moment — no — nothing! Good-night. [*Exit* YORK.

OAKHURST *follows him to door, and then returns to desk, throwing himself in chair, and burying his face in his hands.*

Oakhurst [*with deep feeling*]. It needed but this to fill the measure of my degradation. I have borne the suspicions of the old man's enemies, the half-pitying, half-contemptuous sympathy of his friends, even his own cold, heartless, fanatical fulfilment of his sense of duty; but *this* — this confidence from one who had most reason to scorn me, this trust from one who knew me as I *was*, — this is the hardest burden. And he, too, in time will know me to be an impostor. He

too — a reformed man; but he has honorably retraced his steps, and won the position I hold by a trick, an imposture. And what is all my labor beside his honest sincerity? I have fought against the chances that might discover my deception, against the enemies who would overthrow me, against the fate that put me here; and I have been successful — yes, a successful impostor! I have even fought against the human instinct that told this fierce, foolish old man that *I* was an alien to his house, to his blood; I have even felt him scan my face eagerly for some reflection of his long-lost boy, for some realization of his dream; and I have seen him turn away, cold, heartsick, and despairing. What matters that I have been to him devoted, untiring, submissive, ay, a better son to him than his own weak flesh and blood would have been? He would to-morrow cast me forth to welcome the outcast, Sandy Morton. Well, what matters? [*Recklessly.*] Nothing. In six days it will be over; in six days the year of my probation will have passed; in six days I will disclose to him the deceit I have practised, and will face the world again as John Oakhurst, the gambler, who staked and lost *all* on a single cast. And Jovita! Well, well! — the game is made: it is too late to draw out now. [*Rings bell. Enter* JACKSON.] Who has been here?

Jackson. Only Don José, and Mr. Capper the detective.

Oakhurst. The detective? What for?

Jackson. To work up the robbery, sir.

Oakhurst. True! Capper, Capper, yes! A man of

wild and ridiculous theories, but well-meaning, brave, and honest. [*Aside.*] This is the old man's idea. He does not know that I was on the trail of the thieves an hour before the police were notified. [*Aloud.*] Well, sir?

Jackson. He told your father he thought the recovery of the money hopeless, but he came to caution us against a second attempt.

Oakhurst [*aside, starting*]. True! I had not thought of that. [*Excitedly.*] The success of their first attempt will incite them to another; the money they have stolen is gone by this time. [*Aloud.*] Jackson, I will stay here to-night and to-morrow night, and relieve your regular watchman. You will, of course, say nothing of my intention.

Jackson. Yes, sir. [*Lingering.*]

Oakhurst [*after a pause*]. That is all, Mr. Jackson.

Jackson. Beg your pardon, Mr. Morton; but Col. Starbottle, with two ladies, was here half an hour ago, and said they would come again when you were alone.

Oakhurst. Very well: admit them.

Jackson. Beg pardon, sir; but they seemed to avoid seeing your father until they had seen you. It looked mysterious, and I thought I would tell you first.

Oakhurst [*laughing*]. Admit them, Mr. Jackson. [*Exit* JACKSON.] This poor fellow's devotion is increasing. He, too, believes that his old associate in dissipation, John Oakhurst, *is* the son of Alexander Morton. He, too, will have to share in the disgrace of

the impostor. Ladies! umph! [*Looking down at his clothes.*] I'm afraid the reform of Alexander Morton hasn't improved the usual neatness of John Oakhurst. I haven't slept, nor changed my clothes, for three days. [*Goes to door of* MORTON, *sen.'s, room.*] Locked, and the key on the inside! That's strange. Nonsense! the old man has locked his door, and gone out through the private entrance. Well, I'll find means of making my toilet here.

[*Exit into private room* L.

Enter JACKSON, *leading in* COL. STARBOTTLE, MISS MARY, *the* DUCHESS, *and child of three years.*

Jackson. Mr. Alexander Morton, jun., is in his private room. He will be here in a moment.

[*Exit* JACKSON.

Starbottle. One moment, a single moment, Miss Mary. Permit me to — er — if I may so express myself, to — er — group the party, to — er — place the — er — present company into position. I have — er — observed as part of my — er — legal experience, that in cases of moral illustration a great, I may say — er — tremendous, effect on the — er — jury, I mean the — er — guilty party, has been produced by the attitude of the — er — victim and martyr. You, madam, as the — er — injured wife [*placing her*], shall stand here, firm yet expectant, protecting your child, yet looking hopefully for assistance toward its natural protector. You, Miss Mary, shall stand here [*placing her*], as Moral Retribution, leaning toward and slightly appealing to me, the image of — er — er

— Inflexible Justice! [*Inflates his chest, puts his hand in his bosom, and strikes an attitude.*]

Door of young MORTON'S *room opens, and discloses* MR. OAKHURST *gazing at the group. He starts slightly on observing the* DUCHESS, *but instantly recovers himself, and faces the company coldly. The* DUCHESS *starts on observing* OAKHURST, *and struggles in confusion towards the door, dragging with her the child and* MISS MARY, *who endeavors to re-assure her.* COL. STARBOTTLE *looks in astonishment from one to the other, and advances to front.*

Col. Starbottle [*aside*]. The — er — tableau, although striking in moral force, is apparently — er — deficient in moral stamina.

Miss Mary [*angrily to the* DUCHESS]. I'm ashamed of you! [*To* OAKHURST, *advancing.*] I don't ask pardon for my intrusion. If you are Alexander Morton, you are my kinsman, and you will know that I cannot introduce myself better than as the protector of an injured woman. Come here! [*To the* DUCHESS, *dragging her towards* OAKHURST. *To* OAKHURST.] Look upon this woman: she claims to be —

Starbottle [*stepping between* MISS MARY *and the* DUCHESS]. A moment, Miss Mary, a single moment! Permit me to — er — explain. The whole thing, the — er — situation reminds me, demn me, of most amusing incident at Sacramento in '52. Large party at Hank Suedecois: know Hank? Confirmed old bach of sixty. Dinner for forty. Every thing in style, first families, Ged, — Judge Beeswinger, Mat Boom-

pointer, and Maje Blodgett of Ahlabam: know old Maje Blodgett? Well, Maje was there. Ged, sir, delay, — everybody waiting. I went to Hank. "Hank," I says, "what's matter? why delay?" — "Star," he says, — always called me Star, — "Star, — it's cook!" — "Demn cook," I says: "discharge cook, — only a black mulatto any way!" — "Can't, Star," he says: "impossible!" — "Can't?" says I. "No," says he. "Listen, Star," he says, "family secret! Honor! Can't discharge cook, because cook — demn it — 's *my wife!*" Fact, sir, fact — showed marriage certificate — married privately seven years! Fact, sir —

The Duchess [*to* MISS MARY]. Some other time, miss. Let us go now. There's a mistake, miss, I can't explain. Some other time, miss! See, miss, how cold and stern he looks! another time, miss! [*Struggling.*] For God's sake, miss, let me go!

Miss Mary. No! This mystery must be cleared up now, before I enter *his* house, — before I accept the charge of this —

Starbottle [*interrupting, and crossing before* MISS MARY]. A moment — a single moment, miss. [*To* OAKHURST.] Mr. Morton, you will pardon the exuberance, and perhaps, under the circumstances, somewhat natural impulsiveness, of the — er — sex, for which I am perhaps responsible; I may say — er — personally, sir, — personally responsible —

Oakhurst [*coldly*]. Go on, sir.

Starbottle. The lady on my right is — er — the niece of your father, — your cousin. The lady on

my left, engaged in soothing the — er — bashful timidity of infancy, is — er — that is — er — claims to be, the mother of the child of Alexander Morton.

Oakhurst [*calmly*]. She is right.

Miss Mary [*rushing forward*]. Then you are —

Oakhurst [*gently restraining her*]. You have another question to ask: you hesitate: let me ask it. [*Crossing to the* DUCHESS.] You have heard my answer. Madam, are you the legal wife of Alexander Morton?

The Duchess [*sinking upon her knees, and dropping her face in her hands*]. No!

Oakhurst. Enough: I will take the child. Pardon me, Miss Morris, but you have heard enough to know that your mission is accomplished, but that what else passes between this woman and myself becomes no stranger to hear. [*Motions toward room* L.]

Miss Mary [*aside*]. It is *his* son. I am satisfied [*going*]. Come, colonel. [*Exeunt into room* L., STARBOTTLE *and* MISS MARY.]

The Duchess [*crossing to* OAKHURST, *and falling at his feet*]. Forgive me, Jack, forgive me! It was no fault of mine. I did not know that you were here. I did not know that you had taken his name!

Oakhurst. Hush — on your life!

The Duchess. Hear me, Jack! I was anxious only for a home for my child. I came to *her* — the schoolmistress of Red Gulch — for aid. I told her the name of my boy's father. She — she brought me here. Oh, forgive me, Jack! I have offended you!

Oakhurst. How can I believe you? You have deceived *him.* You have deceived me. Listen! When

I said, a moment ago, you were not the wife of Alexander Morton, it was because I knew that your first husband — the Australian convict Pritchard — was still living; that you had deceived Sandy Morton as you had deceived me. That was why I left you. Tell me, have you deceived me also about him, as you did about the other? Is *he* living, and with you; or dead, as you declared?

The Duchess [*aside*]. He will kill me if I tell him. [*Aloud.*] No, no. He is gone — is dead these three years.

Oakhurst. You swear!

The Duchess [*hesitates, gasps, and looks around for her child; then seizing it, and drawing it toward her*]. I — swear.

Oakhurst. Enough. Seek not to know why *I* am here, and under his name. Enough for you that it has saved your child's future, and secured him his heritage past all revocation. Yet remember! a word from you within the next few days destroys it all. After that, I care not what you say.

The Duchess. Jack! One word, Jack, before I go. I never thought to bring my shame to you! — to *him!*

Oakhurst. It was no trick, then, no contrivance, that brought her here. No: it was fate. And at least I shall save his child.

Re-enter STARBOTTLE, MISS MARY, *and* DUCHESS.

Col. Starbottle [*impressively*]. Permit me, Mr. Alexander Morton, as the friend of my — er — principal,

to declare that we have received — honorable — honorable — satisfaction. Allow me, sir, to grasp the hand, the — er — cherished hand of a gentleman who, demn me! has fulfilled all his duties to — er — society and gentlemen. And allow me to add, sir, should any invidious criticism of the present — er — settlement be uttered in my presence, I shall hold that critic responsible, sir — er — personally responsible!

Miss Mary [*sweeping truculently and aggressively up to* JOHN OAKHURST]. And permit *me* to add, sir, that, if you can see your way clearly out of this wretched muddle, it's more than I can. This arrangement may be according to the Californian code of morality, but it doesn't accord with my Eastern ideas of right and wrong. If this foolish, wretched creature chooses to abandon all claim upon you, chooses to run away from you, — why, I suppose, as a *gentleman*, according to your laws of honor, you are absolved. Good-night, Mr. Alexander Morton. [*Goes to door* C., *and exit, pushing out* STARBOTTLE, *the* DUCHESS, *and child.* MR. OAKHURST *sinks into chair at desk, burying his face in his hands. Re-enter slowly and embarrassedly*, MISS MARY: *looks toward* OAKHURST, *and comes slowly down stage.*]

Miss Mary [*aside*]. I was too hard on him. I was not so hard on Sandy, when I thought that he — he — was the father of her child. And he's my own flesh and blood, too; and — he's crying. [*Aloud.*] Mr. Morton.

Oakhurst [*slowly lifting his head*]. Yes, Miss Mary.

Miss Mary. I spoke hastily just then. I — I — thought — you see — I —[*angrily and passionately*] I mean this. I'm a stranger. I don't understand your Californian ways, and I don't want to. But I believe you've done what you thought was right, according to a *man's* idea of right; and — there's my hand. Take it, take it; for it's a novelty, Mr. Morton: it's the hand of an honest girl!

Oakhurst [*hesitates, then rises, sinks on one knee, and raises* MISS MARY'S *fingers to his lips*]. God bless you, miss! God bless you!

Miss Mary [*retreating to centre door.*] Good-night, good-night [*slowly*], — cousin — Alexander.

[*Exit. Dark stage.*

Oakhurst [*rising swiftly*]. No, no: it is false! Ah! She's gone. Another moment, and I would have told her all. Pshaw! courage, man! It is only six days more, and you are free, and this year's shame and agony forever ended.

Enter JACKSON.

Jackson. As you ordered, sir, the night watchman has been relieved, and has just gone.

Oakhurst. Very good, sir; and you?

Jackson. I relieved the porter, sir; and I shall bunk on two chairs in the counting-room. You'll find me handy, if you want me, sir. Good-night, sir.

[*Exit* C.

Oakhurst. I fear these rascals will not dare to make their second attempt to-night. A quiet scrimmage with them, enough to keep me awake or from think

ing, would be a good fortune. No, no! no such luck for you to-night, John Oakhurst! You are playing a losing game. . . . Yet the robbery was a bold one. At eleven o'clock, while the bank was yet lighted, and Mr. Jackson and another clerk were at work here, three well-dressed men pick the lock of the counting-house door, enter, and turn the key on the clerks in this parlor, and carry away a box of doubloons not yet placed in the vaults by the porter; and all this done so cautiously that the clerks within knew nothing of it until notified of the open street-door by the private watchman, and so boldly that the watchman, seeing them here, believed them clerks of the bank, and let them go unmolested. No: this was the coincidence of good luck, not of bold premeditation. There will be no second attempt. [*Yawns.*] If they don't come soon I shall fall asleep. Four nights without rest will tell on a man, unless he has some excitement to back him. [*Nods.*] Hallo! What was that? Oh! Jackson in the counting-room getting to bed. I'll look at that front-door myself. [*Takes revolver from desk, and goes to door* C., *tries lock, comes down stage with revolver, examines it, and lays it down.*]

Oakhurst [*slowly and quietly*]. The door is locked on the outside: that may have been an accident. The caps are taken from my pistol: *that* was not! Well, here is the vault, and here is John Oakhurst: to reach the one, they must pass the other. [*Takes off his coat, seizes poker from grate, and approaches safe.*] Ha! some one is moving in the old man's room. [*Approaches door of room* R. *as* —

Enter noiselessly and cautiously from room L., PRITCHARD, SILKY, *and* SOAPY. PRITCHARD *and his confederates approach* OAKHURST *from behind, carrying lariat, or slip-noose.*

Oakhurst [*listening at door* R.]. Good. At least I know from what quarter to expect the attack. Ah!

PRITCHARD *throws slip-noose over* OAKHURST *from behind;* OAKHURST *puts his hand in his breast as the slip-noose is drawn across his bosom, pinioning one arm over his breast, and the other at his side.* SILKY *and* SOAPY, *directed by* PRITCHARD, *drag* OAKHURST *to chair facing front, and pinion his legs.* PRITCHARD C., *regarding him.*

Oakhurst [*very coolly*]. You have left me my voice, I suppose, because it is useless.

Pritchard. That's so, pard. 'Twon't be no help to ye.

Oakhurst. Then you have killed Jackson.

Pritchard. Lord love ye, no! That ain't like us, pard! Jackson's tendin' door for us, and kinder lookin' out gin'rally for the boys. Thar's nothin' mean about Jackson.

Soapy. No! Jackson's a squar man. Eh, Silky?

Silky. Ez white a man ez they is, pard!

Oakhurst [*aside*]. The traitor! [*Aloud.*] Well!

Pritchard. Well, you want ter know our business. Call upon a business man in business hours. Our little game is this, Mr. Jack Morton Alexander Oakhurst. When we was here the other night, we was wantin' a key to that theer lock [*pointing to vault*], and we sorter dropped in passin' to get it.

Oakhurst. And suppose I refuse to give it up?

Pritchard. We were kalkilatin' on yer bein' even that impolite: wasn't we, boys?

Silky and Soapy. We was that.

Pritchard. And so we got Mr. Jackson to take an impression of it in wax. Oh, he's a squar man — is Mr. Jackson!

Silky. Jackson is a white man, Soapy!

Soapy. They don't make no better men nor Jackson, Silky.

Pritchard. And we've got a duplicate key here. But we don't want any differences, pard: we only want a squar game. It seemed to us — some of your old pards as knew ye, Jack — that ye had a rather soft thing here, reformin'; and we thought ye was kinder throwin' off on the boys, not givin' 'em any hand in the game. But thar ain't any thin' mean about us. Eh, boys?

Soapy. We is allers ready to chip in ekal in the game. Eh, Silky?

Silky. That's me, Soapy.

Pritchard. Ye see, the boys is free and open-handed, Jack. And so the proposition we wanter make to ye, Jack, is this. It's reg'lar on the squar. We reckon, takin' Mr. Jackson's word, — and thar ain't no man's word ez is better nor Jackson's, — that there's nigh on to two millions in that vault, not to speak of a little speshil de-posit o' York's, ez we learn from that accommodatin' friend Mr. Jackson. We propose to share it with ye, on ekil terms — us five — countin' Jackson, a square man. In course, we takes the risk

o' packin' it away to-night comfortable. Ez your friends, Jack, we allow this yer little arrangement to be a deuced sight easier for you than playin' Sandy Morton on a riglar salary, with the chance o' the real Sandy poppin' in upon ye any night.

Oakhurst. It's a lie. Sandy is dead.

Pritchard. In course, in course! that is your little game! But we kalkilated, Jack, even on that, on yer beiu.' rambunktious and contrary; and so we went ter Red Gulch, and found Sandy. Ye know I take a kind o' interest in Sandy: he's the second husband of my wife, the woman you run away with, pard. But thar's nothin' mean about me! eh, boys?

Silky. No! he's the forgivingest kind of a man, is Pritchard.

Soapy. That's so, Silky.

Pritchard. And, thinkin' ye might be dubious, we filled Sandy about full o' rye-whisky, and brought him along; and one of our pards is preambulatin' the streets with him, ready to bring him on call.

Oakhurst. It's a lie, Pritchard, — a cowardly lie!

Pritchard. Is it? Hush!

Sandy [*without, singing*], —

Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!
Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!
Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
All alive and just a-snortin!
Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!

Pritchard. We don't propose to run him in yer, 'cept we're took, or yer unaccommodatin' to the boys.

Oakhurst. And if I refuse?

Pritchard. Why, we'll take what we can get; and we'll leave Sandy Morton with you yer, to sorter alleviate the old man's feelin's over the loss of his money. There's nothin' mean about us; no! eh, boys? [*Going toward safe.*]

Oakhurst. Hear me a moment, Henry Pritchard. [PRITCHARD *stops abreast of* OAKHURST.] Four years ago you were assaulted in the Arcade Saloon in Sacramento. You would have been killed, but your assailant suddenly fell dead by a pistol-shot fired from some unknown hand. I stood twenty feet from you with folded arms; but that shot was fired by me, — me, Henry Pritchard, — through my clothes, from a derringer hidden in my waistcoat! Understand me, I do not ask your gratitude now. But that pistol is in my right hand, and now covers you. Make a single motion, — of a muscle, — and it is your last.

Pritchard [*motionless, but excitedly*]. You dare not fire! No, dare not! A shot here will bring my pal and Sandy Morton to confront you. You will have killed me to save exposure, have added murder to imposture! You have no witness to this attempt!

Capper [*opening door of room* L., *at the same moment that two policemen appear at door* C., *and two at room* R.] You are wrong: he has five [*crossing to* SILKY *and* SOAPY, *and laying his hands on their shoulders*]; and, if I mistake not, he has two more in these gentlemen, whom I know, and who will be quite as willing to

furnish the necessary State's evidence of the robbery, as of the fact that they never knew any other Alexander Morton than the gentleman who sits in that chair.

Soapy. That's so, Silky.

Silky. That's so, Soapy.

Capper [*to policemen*]. Take them away.

[*Exit policemen with* PRITCHARD, SOAPY, *and* SILKY. CAPPER *unbinds* OAKHURST.

Oakhurst. Then I have to thank you, Mr. C.

Capper. Yes! "A man of ridiculous theories, but well-meaning, brave, and honest." No, sir; don't apologize: you were right, Mr. Oakhurst. It is I who owe you an apology. I came here, believing *you* were the robber, having no faith in you or your reformation, expecting, — yes, sir, — hoping, to detect you in the act. Hear me! From the hour you first entered the bank, I have shadowed your every movement, I have been the silent witness of all that has passed in this room. You have played a desperate game, Mr. Oakhurst; but I'll see you through it. If you are true to your resolve, for the next six days, I will hold these wretches silent. I will protect your imposture with the strong arm of the law. I don't like *your* theories, sir; but I believe you to be well-meaning, and I know you to be brave and honest.

Oakhurst [*grasping his hand*]. I shall not forget this. But Sandy —

Capper. I will put my men on his track, and have him brought quietly here. I can give you no aid beyond that. As an honorable man, I need not tell you your duty. Settle it with *him* as best you can.

Oakhurst. You are right; I *will* see him! [*Aside.*] Unless he has changed, he will listen to me, he will obey me.

Capper. Hush! [*Blows out candle.*] Stand here!

CAPPER *and* OAKHURST *retreat to wing* L., *as enter* MORTON, *sen.*, *from room* R.

Morton. The private door open, the room dark, and Capper gone. I don't like this. The more I think of the mystery of that man's manner this morning, the more it seems to hide some terrible secret I must fathom! There are watches here. [*Strikes a light, as* CAPPER *draws* OAKHURST, *struggling, back into shadow.*] What's this? [*Picking up key.*] The key of the vault. A chair overturned. [*Touches bell.*] No answer! Jackson gone! My God! A terrible suspicion haunts me! No. Hush! [*Retreats to private room* R., *as door of* L. *opens and*—

Enter SANDY.

Sandy [*drunkenly*]. Shoo! Shoo! boys, whar are ye, boys, eh? Pritchard, Silky, Soapy! Whar ar ye, boys?

Morton [*aside*]. A crime has been committed, and here is one of the gang. God has delivered him in my hands. [*Draws revolver, and fires, as* OAKHURST *breaks from* CAPPER, *and strikes up* MORTON'S *pistol.* CAPPER *at same moment seizes* SANDY, *and drags him in room* L. MORTON *and* OAKHURST *struggle to centre.*

Morton [*relaxing hold of Oakhurst*]. Alexander! Good God! Why are you here? Why have you stepped between me and retribution? You hesitate.

God in heaven! Speak, Alexander, my son, speak for God's sake! Tell me — tell me that this detective's suspicions are not true. Tell me that you are not — not — no, I cannot say it. Speak, Alexander Morton, I command you! Who is this man you have saved? Is it — is it — your accomplice?

Oakhurst [*sinking at his feet*]. Don't ask me! You know not what you ask! I implore you —

Capper [*appearing quietly from room* L., *and locking the door behind him*]. Your son has acted under *my* orders. The man he has saved, as he has saved you, was a *decoy*, — one of my policemen.

TABLEAU.

CAPPER, MORTON, OAKHURST.

[*Curtain.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE 1. — MR. MORTON'S *villa*, *Russian Hill. Night.* OAKHURST'S *bedroom. Sofa in alcove* C., *door in flat left of* C. SANDY MORTON *discovered, unconscious, lying on sofa;* OAKHURST *standing at his head, two policemen at his feet. Candles on table* L.

Oakhurst. That will do. You are sure he was unconscious as you brought him in?

1*st Policeman.* Sure, sir? He hasn't known anything since we picked him up on the sidewalk outside the bank.

Oakhurst. Good! You have fulfilled your orders well, and your chief shall know it. Go now. Be as cautious in going out as you were on entering. Here is the private staircase. [*Opens door* L.]

[*Exit policemen.*

Oakhurst [*listening*]. Gone! and without disturbing any one. So far, luck has befriended me. He will sleep to-night beneath his father's roof. His father! umph! would the old man recognize him here? Would he take to his heart this drunken outcast, picked from the gutters of the street, and brought here by the strong arm of the law? Hush! [*A knock without.*] Ah, it is the colonel: he is prompt to the hour. [*Opens door cautiously, and admits* COL. STARBOTTLE.]

Starbottle [*looking around, and overlooking* SANDY]. I presume the other — er — principal is not yet on the ground?

Oakhurst [*motioning to sofa*]. He *is!*

Starbottle [*starting as he looks towards sofa*]. Ged! you don't mean to say it's all *over*, without witnesses, without my — er — presence?

Oakhurst. Pardon me, Col. Starbottle; but, if you look again, you will perceive that the gentleman is only drunk.

Starbottle. Eh? Ged! not uncommon, sir, not uncommon! I remember singular incident at — er — Louisville in '47. Old Judge Tollim — know old Judge Tolly? — Ged! he came to ground drunk, sir; couldn't stand! Demn me, sir, had to put him into position with kitchen poker down his back, and two sections of lightning-rod in his — er — trousers, demn me! Firm, sir, firm, you understand, here [*striking his breast*], but — here [*striking his legs*] — er — er — wobbly! No, sir! Intoxication of principal not a bar, sir, to personal satisfaction! [*Goes toward sofa with eyeglass.*] Good Ged! why, it's Diego! [*Returning stiffly to* OAKHURST.] Excuse me, sir, but this is a case in which I cannot act. Cannot, sir, — impossible! absurd! pre — post — er — ous! I recognize in the — er — inebriated menial on yonder sofa, a person, sir, who, having already declined my personal challenge, is — er — excluded from the consideration of gentlemen. The person who lies there, sir, is Diego, — a menial of Don José Castro, — *alias* "Sandy," the vagabond of Red Gulch.

Oakhurst. You have omitted one title, his true one. He is Alexander Morton, the son of the master of this house.

Starbottle [*starting in bewilderment*]. Alexander Morton! [*Aside.*] Ged! my first suspicions were correct. Star, you have lost the opportunity of making your fortune as a scoundrel; but you have, at a pecuniary sacrifice, preserved your honor.

Oakhurst. Yes. Hear me, Col. Starbottle. I have summoned you here to-night, as I have already intimated, on an affair of honor. I have sought you as my father's legal counsel, as a disinterested witness, as a gentleman of honor. The man who lies before you was once my friend and partner. I have wronged him doubly. As his partner, I ran away with the woman he believed, and still believes, to be his wife; as his friend, I have for a twelvemonth kept him from the enjoyment of his home, his patrimony, by a shameful deception. I have summoned you to-night to witness my confession; as a lawyer, to arrange those details necessary to restore to him his property; as a man of honor, to receive from me whatever retribution he demands. You will be a witness to our interview. Whatever befalls me here, you will explain to Mr. Morton — to Jovita — that I accepted it as a man, and did not avoid, here or elsewhere, the penalty of my crime. [*Folding his arms.*]

Starbottle. Umph! The case is, as you say, a delicate one, but not — not — peculiar. No, sir! Ged, sir, I remember Tom Marshall — know Tom Marshall of Kentucky? — said to me, "Star!" — always calls

me Star, — "how in blank, sir, can you remember the *real* names of your clients?" — "Why," says I, "Tom," — always called him Tom, — "yesterday I was called to make will — most distinguished family of Virginia — as lawyer and gentleman, you understand: can't mention name. Waited for signature — most distinguished name: Ged, sir, man signed Bloggins, — Peter Bloggins. Fact, demme! 'Mistake,' I said, — 'excitement; exaltation of fever. *Non compos.* Compose yourself, Bob.' — 'Star,' he said, — always called me Star, — 'for forty-seven years I have been an impostor!' — his very words, sir. 'I am not' — you understand: 'I *am* Peter Bloggins!'"

Oakhurst. But, my dear colonel, I —

Starbottle [*loftily*]. Say no more, sir! I accept the — er — position. Let us see! The gentleman will, on recognition, probably make a personal attack. You are armed. Ah, no? Umph! On reflection I would not permit him to strike a single blow: I would anticipate it. It will provoke the challenge from him, leaving *you*, sir, the — er — choice of weapons.

Oakhurst. Hush! he is moving! Take your stand here, in this alcove. Remember, as a gentleman, and a man of honor, Col. Starbottle, I trust you not to interfere between the injured man and — justice! [*Pushes* COL. STARBOTTLE *into alcove behind couch, and approaches* SANDY.]

Sandy [*waking slowly — and incoherently*]. Hush Silky! Hush! Eh? Oh, hush yourself! [*Sings.*]

Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!

Eh! Oh! [*Half sits up on couch.*] Eh! [*Looking around him.*] Where the devil am I?

Oakhurst [*advancing and leaning over* SANDY'S *couch*]. In the house of your father, Alexander Morton.

Sandy [*recoiling in astonishment*]. His voice, John Oakhurst! What — ah! [*Rises, and rushes towards* OAKHURST *with uplifted hand.*]

Starbottle [*gesticulating in whisper*]. A blow! a single blow would be sufficient.

Sandy [*looking at* OAKHURST, *who regards him calmly*]. I — eh! I — eh! Ha, ha! I'm glad to see — old pard! I'm glad to see ye! [COL. STARBOTTLE *lifts his hand in amazement.*]

Oakhurst [*declining his hand*]. Do you understand me, Sandy Morton? Listen. I am John Oakhurst, — the man who has deceived your father, who has deceived you.

Sandy [*without heeding his words, but regarding him affectionately*]. To think of it — Jack Oakhurst! It's like him, like Jack. He was allers onsartain, the darned little cuss! Jack! Look at him, will ye, boys? look at him! Growed too, and dressed to kill, and sittin' in this yer house as natril as a jaybird! [*Looking around.*] Nasty, ain't it, Jack? and this yer's your house — the old man's house — eh? Why, this is — this is where she came. Jack, Jack! [*Eagerly.*] Tell me, pard, — where is she?

Starbottle [*aside, rubbing his hands*]. We shall have it now!

Oakhurst. She has gone, — gone! But hear me! She had deceived you as she has me. She has gone, — gone with her first husband, Henry Pritchard.

Sandy [*stupefied*]. Gone! Her first husband! Pritchard!

Oakhurst. Ay, your wife!

Sandy. Oh, damn my wife! I'm talking of Mary, — Miss Mary, — the little schoolma'am, Jack; the little rose of Poker Flat. Oh! I see — ye didn't know her, Jack, — the pertiest, sweetest little —

Oakhurst [*turning away coldly*]. Ay, ay! She is here!

Sandy [*looking after him affectionately*]. Look at him, boys! Allers the same, — high-toned, cold, even to his pardner! That's him, — Jack Oakhurst! But Jack, Jack, you're goin' to shake hands, ain't ye? [*Extends his hand, after a pause.* OAKHURST *takes it gloomily.*]

Col. Starbottle [*who has been regarding interview with visible scorn and disgust, advancing to* OAKHURST]. You will — er — pardon me if, under the — er — circumstances, I withdraw from this — er — disgraceful proceeding. The condonation, by that man, of two of the most tremendous offences to society and to the code, without apology or satisfaction, Ged, sir, is — er — er — of itself an insult to the spectator. I go, sir —

Oakhurst. But, Col. Starbottle —

Starbottle. Permit me to say, sir, that I hold myself for this, sir, responsible, sir, — personally responsible.

[*Exit* STARBOTTLE, *glancing furiously at* SANDY, *who sinks on sofa laughing.*]

Oakhurst [*aside*]. He will change his mind in half an hour. But, in the mean time, time is precious. [*Aloud.*] Sandy, come!

Sandy [*rising with alacrity*]. Yes, Jack, I'm ready.

Oakhurst. We are going [*slowly and solemnly*] — we are going to see your father.

Sandy [*dropping back with bashful embarrassment, and struggling to release his arm from* OAKHURST]. No, Jack! Not just yet, Jack; in a little while, ole boy! in about six months, or mebbe — a year, Jack! not now, not now! I ain't feelin' exactly well, Jack, — I ain't.

Oakhurst. Nonsense, Sandy! Consider your duty and my honor.

Sandy [*regaining his seat*]. That's all very well, Jack; but ye see, pard, you've known the old man for nigh on a year, and it's twenty-five since I met him. No, Jack; you don't play any ole man on to me to-night, Jack. No, you and me'll just drop out for a *pasear.* Jack, eh? [*Taking* OAKHURST'S *arm.*] Come!

Oakhurst. Impossible! Hush! [*Listening.*] It is *he* passing through the corridor. [*Goes to wing* R., *and listens.*]

Sandy [*crowding hastily behind* OAKHURST *in alarm*]. But, I say, Jack! he won't come in here? He's goin' to bed, you know. Eh? It ain't right for a man o' his years — and he must be goin' on ninety, Jack — to be up like this. It ain't healthy.

Oakhurst. You know him not. He seems to need

no rest [*sadly*]. Night after night, long after the servants are abed, and the house is still, I hear that step slowly pacing the corridor. It is the last sound as I close my eyes, the first challenge of the morning.

Sandy. The ol' scound — [*checking himself*] — I mean, Jack, the ol' man has suthin' on his mind. But, Jack [*in great alarm*], he don't waltz in upon ye, Jack? He don't p'int them feet in yer, Jack? Ye ain't got to put up with that, Jack, along o' yer other trials?

Oakhurst. He often seeks me here. Ah — yes — he is coming this way now.

Sandy [*in ludicrous terror*]. Jack, pard, quick! hide me somewhere, Jack!

Oakhurst [*opening door* R.]. In there, quick! Not a sound, as you value your future!

[*Exit* SANDY *hurriedly* R.

SCENE 2. — *The Same. Enter door* R., OLD MORTON, *in dressing-gown, with candle.*

Old Morton. Not abed yet, Alexander? Well, well, I don't blame you, my son: it has been for you a trying, trying night. Yes, I see: like me, you are a little nervous and wakeful. [*Slowly takes chair, and comfortably composes himself.*]

Oakhurst [*aside*]. He is in for a midnight gossip. How shall I dispose of Sandy?

Old Morton. Yes [*meditatively*], — yes, you have overworked lately. Never mind. In a day or two more you shall have a vacation, sir, — a vacation!

Oakhurst [*aside*]. He knows not how truly he speaks. [*Aloud.*] Yes, sir, I was still up. I have only just now dismissed the policemen.

Old Morton. Ay. I heard voices, and saw a light in your window. I came to tell you, Alexander, Capper has explained all about — about the decoy! More; he has told me of your courage and your invaluable assistance. For a moment, sir, — I don't mind telling you now in confidence, — I doubted *you* —

Oakhurst [*in feigned deprecation*]. Oh, sir!

Old Morton. Only for a moment. You will find, Alexander, that even that doubt shall have full apology when the year of your probation has expired. Besides, sir, I know all.

Oakhurst [*starting*]. All!

Old Morton. Yes, the story about the Duchess and your child. You are surprised. Col. Starbottle told me all. I forgive you, Alexander, for the sake of your boy.

Oakhurst. My boy, sir!

Old Morton. Yes, your boy. And let me tell you, sir, he's a fine young fellow. Looks like you, — looks as you did when *you* were a boy. He's a Morton too, every inch of him, there's no denying that. No, sir. *You* may have changed; but he — he — is the living image of my little Alexander. He took to me, too, — lifted his little arms — and — and — [*Becomes affected, and leans his head in his hands.*]

Oakhurst [*rising*]. You are not well, sir. Let me lead you to your room.

Old Morton. No! It is nothing: a glass of water, Alexander!

Oakhurst [*aside*]. He is very pale. The agitation of the night has overcome him. [*Goes to table* R.] A

little spirits will revive him. [*Pours from decanter in glass, and returns to Morton.*]

Old Morton [*after drinking*]. There was spirits in that water, Alexander. Five years ago, I vowed at your mother's grave to abandon the use of intoxicating liquors.

Oakhurst. Believe me, sir, my mother will forgive you.

Old Morton. Doubtless. It has revived me. I am getting to be an old man, Aleck. [*Holds out his glass half unconsciously, and* OAKHURST *replenishes it from decanter.*] Yes, an old man, Aleck; but the boy, — ah, I live again in him. The little rascal! He asked me, Aleck, for a "chaw tobacker!" and wanted to know if I was the "ol' duffer." Ha, ha! He did. Ha, ha! Come, come, don't be despondent. I was like you once, damn it, — ahem — it's all for the best, my boy, all for the best. I'll take the young rascal [*aside*] — damn it, he's already taken me — [*aloud*] on equal terms. There, Aleck, what do you say?

Oakhurst. Really, sir, this forbearance, — this kindness — [*aside*] I see a ray of light.

Old Morton. Nonsense! I'll take the boy, I tell you, and do well for him, — the little rascal! — as if he were the legal heir. But, I say, Aleck [*laughing*], ha, ha! — what about — ha, ha! — what about Doña Jovita, eh? and what about Don José Castro, eh? How will the lady like a ready-made family, eh? [*Poking* OAKHURST *in the ribs.*] What will the Don say to the family succession? Ha, ha!

Oakhurst [*proudly*]. Really, sir, I care but little.

Old Morton [*aside*]. Oh, ho! I'll sound him [*Aloud.*] Look ye, Alexander, I have given my word to you and Don José Castro, and I'll keep it. But if you can do any better, eh — if — eh? — the schoolma'am's a mighty pretty girl and a bright one, eh, Aleck? And it's all in the family — eh? And she thinks well of you; and I will say, for a girl brought up as she's been, and knowin' your relations with the Duchess and the boy, to say a kind word for ye, Aleck, is a good sign, — you follow me, Aleck, — if you think — why, old Don José might whistle for a son-in-law, eh?

Oakhurst [*interrupting indignantly*]. Sir! [*Aside.*] Stop! [*Aloud.*] Do you mean to say, sir, that if I should consent to this — suggestion — that, if the lady were willing, *you* would offer no impediment?

Old Morton. Impediment, my dear boy! you should have my blessing.

Oakhurst. Pardon me a moment. You have in the last year, sir, taught me the importance of business formality in all the relations of life. Following that idea, the conditions of my engagement with Jovita Castro were drawn up with your hand. Are you willing to make this recantation as formal, this new contract as business-like and valid?

Old Morton [*eagerly*]. I am.

Oakhurst. Then sit here, and write at my dictation. [*Pointing to table* L. OLD MORTON *takes seat at table.*] "In view of the evident preferences of my son Alexander Morton, and of certain family interests, I hereby revoke my consent to his marriage with the Doña Jo-

vita Castro, and accord him full permission to woo and win his cousin, Miss Mary Morris, promising him the same aid and assistance previously offered in his suit with Miss Castro."

Old Morton [*signing*]. Alexander Morton, sen. There, Aleck! You have forgotten one legal formality. We have no witness. Ha, ha!

Oakhurst [*significantly*]. *I* will be a sufficient witness.

Old Morton. Ha, ha! [*Fills glass from decanter, after which* OAKHURST *quietly removes decanter beyond his reach.*] Very good! Aleck, I've been thinking of a plan, — I've been thinking of retiring from the bank. I'm getting old, and my ways are not the popular ways of business here. I've been thinking of you, you dog, — of leaving the bank to you, — to you, sir, — eh — the day — the day you marry the schoolma'am — eh. I'll stay home, and take care of the boy — eh — hic! The little rascal! — lifted his arms to me — did, Aleck! by God! [*Incoherently.*] Eh!

Oakhurst. Hush! [*Aside.*] Sandy will overhear him, and appear.

Old Morton [*greatly affected by liquor*]. Hush! eh! — of course — shoo! shoo! [*The actor will here endeavor to reproduce in* OLD MORTON'S *drunken behavior, without exactly imitating him, the general characteristics of his son's intoxication.*] Eh — I say, Aleck, old boy! what will the Don say? eh? Ha, ha, ha! And Jovita, that firebrand, how will she — hic — like it, eh? [*Laughs immoderately.*]

Oakhurst. Hush! We will be overheard! The servants, sir!

Old Morton. Damn the servants! Don't I — hic — pay them wages — eh?

Oakhurst. Let me lead you to your own room. You are nervously excited. A little rest, sir, will do you good. [*Taking his arm.*]

Old Morton. No shir, no shir, 'm nerrer goin' to bed any more. Bed's bad habit! — hic — drunken habit. Lesh stay up all ni, Aleck! You and me! Lesh nev'r — go — bed any more! Whar's whiskey — eh? [*Staggers to the table for decanter as* OAKHURST *seizes him, struggle up stage, and then* OLD MORTON, *in struggle, falls helplessly on sofa, in same attitude as* SANDY *was discovered.*]

Enter SANDY *cautiously from door* L.

Sandy [*to* OAKHURST]. Jack! Eh, Jack —

Oakhurst. Hush! Go! I will follow you in a moment. [*Pushes him back to door* L.]

Sandy [*catching sight of* OLD MORTON]. Hallo! What's up?

Oakhurst. Nothing. He was overtaken with a sudden faintness. He will revive presently: go!

Sandy [*hesitating*]. I say, Jack, he wasn't taken sick along o' me, eh, Jack?

Oakhurst. No! No! But go [*pushing him toward door*].

Sandy. Hold on: I'm going. But, Jack, I've got a kind of faintness yer, too. [*Goes to side-table, and takes up decanter.*] And thar's nothing reaches that faintness like whiskey. [*Fills glass.*]

Old Morton [*drunkenly and half-consciously from couch*]. Whiskey — who shed — whiskey — eh? Eh — O — gim'me some, Aleck — Aleck, my son, — my son! — my old prodigal — Old Proddy, my boy — gim-me — whiskey — [*sings*] —

Oh, yer's yer good old whiskey,
Drink it down!

Eh? I com — mand you — pass the whiskey!

SANDY, *at first panic-stricken, and then remorsefully conscious, throws glass down, with gesture of fear and loathing.* OAKHURST *advances to his side hurriedly.*

Oakhurst [*in hurried whisper*]. Give him the whiskey, quick! It will keep him quiet. [*Is about to take decanter when* SANDY *seizes it: struggle with* OAKHURST.]

Sandy [*with feeling*]. No, no, Jack, no! [*Suddenly, with great strength and determination, breaks from him, and throws decanter from window.*] No, *never!*

Old Morton [*struggling drunkenly to his feet*]. Eh — who sh'd never? [OAKHURST *shoves* SANDY *in room* L., *and follows him, closing door.*] Eh, Aleck? [*Groping.*] Eh, where'sh light? All gone. [*Lapses on sofa again, after an ineffectual struggle to get up, and then resumes his old attitude.*]

[*Change scene quickly.*]

SCENE 3. — *Ante-room in* MR. MORTON'S *villa. Front scene. Enter* DON JOSÉ CASTRO *and* CONCHO, *preceded by* SERVANT, L.

Servant. This way, gentlemen.

Don José. Carry this card to Alexander Morton, sen.

Servant. Beg pardon, sir, but there's only one name here, sir [*looking at* CONCHO].

Don José [*proudly*]. That is my servant, sir.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

Don José [*aside*]. I don't half like this business. But my money locked up in his bank, and my daughter's hand bound to his son, demand it. [*Aloud.*] This is no child's play, Concho, you understand.

Concho. Ah! I am wise. Believe me, if I have not proofs which shall blanch the cheek of this old man, I am a fool, Don José!

Re-enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Morton, sen., passed a bad night, and has left word not to be disturbed this morning. But Mr. Morton, jun., will attend you, sir.

Concho [*aside*]. So the impostor will face it out. Well, let him come.

Don José [*to* SERVANT]. I wait his pleasure.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

Don José. You hear, Concho? You shall face this man. I shall repeat to him all you have told me. If you fail to make good your charge, on your head rests the consequences.

Concho. He will of course deny. He is a desperate man: he will perhaps attack me. Eh! Ah! [*Drawing revolver.*]

Don José. Put up your foolish weapon. The sight of the father he has deceived will be more terrible to him than the pistol of the spy.

Enter COL. STARBOTTLE, C.

Starbottle. Mr. Alexander Morton, jun., will be with you in a moment. [*Takes attitude by door, puts his hand in his breast, and inflates himself.*]

Concho [*to* DON JOSÉ, *aside*]. It is the bullying lawyer. They will try to outface us, my patron; but we shall triumph. [*Aloud.*] He comes, eh! — Mr. Alexander Morton, gentlemen! I will show you a cheat, an impostor!

Enter, in correct, precise morning dress, SANDY MORTON. *There is in his make-up and manner a suggestion of the father.*

Concho [*recoiling, aside*]. Diego! The real son! [*Aloud, furiously.*] It is a trick to defeat justice, — eh! — a miserable trick! But it shall fail, it shall fail!

Col. Starbottle. Permit me, a moment, — a single moment. [*To* CONCHO.] You have — er — er — characterized my introduction of this — er — gentleman as a "cheat" and an "imposture." Are you prepared to deny that this is Alexander Morton?

Don José [*astonished, aside*]. These Americaños are of the Devil! [*Aloud and sternly.*] Answer him, Concho, I command you.

Concho [*in half-insane rage*]. It is Alexander Morton; but it is a trick, — a cowardly trick! Where is the other impostor, this Mr. John Oakhurst?

Sandy [*advancing with dignity and something of his father's cold manner*]. He will answer for himself, when called for. [*To* DON JOSÉ.] You have asked for me, sir: may I inquire your business?

Concho. Eh! It is a trick, — a trick!

Don José [*to* CONCHO]. Silence, sir! [*To* SANDY, *with dignity.*] I know not the meaning of this masquerade. I only know that you are *not* the gentleman hitherto known to me as the son of Alexander Morton. I am here, sir, to demand my rights as a man of property and a father. I have received this morning a check from the house of Morton & Son, for the amount of my deposit with them. So far — in view of this complication — it is well. Who knows? *Bueno!* But the signature of Morton & Son to the check is not in the handwriting I have known. Look at it, sir. [*To* SANDY, *handing check.*]

Sandy [*examining check*]. It is my handwriting, sir, and was signed this morning. Has it been refused?

Don José. Pardon me, sir. It has not been presented. With this doubt in my mind, I preferred to submit it first to you.

Starbottle. A moment, a single moment, sir. While as a — er — gentleman and a man of honor, I — er — appreciate your motives, permit me to say, sir, as a lawyer, that your visit is premature. On the testimony of your own witness, the identification of Mr. Alexander Morton, jun., is — er — complete; he has admitted the signature as his own; you have not yet presented the check to the bank.

Don José. Pardon me, Col. Starbottle. It is not all. [*To* SANDY.] By a written agreement with Alexander Morton, sen., the hand of my daughter is promised to his son, who now stands before me, as my former servant, dismissed from my service for drunk enness.

Sandy. That agreement is revoked.

Don José. Revoked!

Sandy [*handing paper*]. Cast your eyes over that paper. At least you will recognize *that* signature.

Don José [*reads*]. "In view of the evident preferences of my son Alexander Morton, and of certain family interests, I hereby rovoke my consent to his marriage with the Doña Jovita Castro, and accord him full permission to woo and win his cousin, Miss Mary Morris; promising him the same aid and assistance previously offered in his suit with Miss Castro. — ALEXANDER MORTON, SEN."

Concho. Ah! *Carramba!* Do you not see the trick, — eh, the conspiracy? It was this man, as Diego, your daughter's groom, helped his friend Mr. Oakhurst to the heiress. Ah, you comprehend! It was an old trick! You shall see, you shall see! Ah! I am wise, I am wise!

Don José [*aside*]. Could I have been deceived? But no! This paper that releases *him* gives the impostor no claim.

Sandy [*resuming his old easy manner, dropping his formality, and placing his hand on* DON JOSÉ'S *shoulder*]. Look yar, ole man: I didn't allow to ever see ye agin, and this yer ain't none o' *my* seekin'. But, since yer here, I don't mind tellin' ye that but for me that gal of yours would have run away a year ago, and married an unknown lover. And I don't mind adding, that, hed I known that unknown lover was my friend John Oakhurst, I'd have helped her do it [*Going.*] Good-morning, Don José.

Don José. Insolent! I shall expect an account for this from your — father, sir.

Sandy. Adios, Don José. [*Exit* C.

Concho. It is a trick — I told you. Ah, I am wise. [*Going to* DON JOSÉ.]

Don José [*throwing him off*]. Fool! [*Exit* DON JOSÉ.

Concho [*infuriated*]. Eh! Fool yourself — dotard! No matter: I will expose all — ah! I will see Jovita; — I will revenge myself on this impostor! [*Is about to follow, when* COL. STARBOTTLE *leaves his position by the door, and touches* CONCHO *on the shoulder.*]

Starbottle. Excuse me.

Concho. Eh?

Starbottle. You have forgotten something.

Concho. Something?

Starbottle. An apology, sir. You were good enough to express — er — incredulity — when I presented Mr. Morton: you were kyind enough to characterize the conduct of my — er — principal by — an epithet. You have alluded to me, sir, — ME —

Concho [*wrathfully*]. Bully! [*Aside.*] I have heard that this *pomposo*, this braggart, is a Yankee trick too; that he has the front of a lion, the liver of the chicken. [*Aloud.*] Yes, I have said, you hear I have said, I, CONCHO [*striking his breast*], have said you are a — bully!

Starbottle [*coolly*]. Then you are prepared to give me satisfaction, sir, — personal satisfaction.

Concho [*raging*]. Yes, sir, now — you understand, now [*taking out pistol*], anywhere, here! Yes, here. Ah! you start, — yes, here and now! Face to face,

you understand, without seconds, — face to face. So! [*Presenting pistol.*]

Starbottle [*quietly*]. Permit me to — er — apologize.

Concho. Ah! It is too late!

Starbottle [*interrupting*]. Excuse me, but I feared you would not honor me so completely and satisfactorily. Ged, sir, I begin to respect you! I accede to all your propositions of time and position. The pistol you hold in your hand is a derringer, I presume, loaded. Ah — er — I am right. The one I now produce [*showing pistol*] is — er — as you will perceive the same size and pattern, and — er — unloaded. We will place them both, so, under the cloth of this table. You shall draw one pistol, I will take the other. I will put that clock at ten minutes to nine, when we will take our positions across this table; as you — er happily express it, "face to face." As the clock strikes the hour, we will fire on the second stroke.

Concho [*aside*]. It is a trick, a Yankee trick! [*Aloud.*] I am ready. Now — at once!

Starbottle [*gravely*]. Permit me, sir, to thank you. Your conduct, sir, reminds me of singular incident —

Concho [*angrily interrupting*]. Come, come! It is no child's play. We have much of this talk, eh! It is action, eh, you comprehend, — action.

[STARBOTTLE *places pistols under the cloth, and sets clock.* CONCHO *draws pistol from cloth;* STARBOTTLE *takes remaining pistol. Both men assume position, presenting their weapons;* STARBOTTLE *pompously but seriously,* CONCHO *angrily and nervously.*]

Starbottle [*after a pause*]. One moment, a single moment —

Concho. Ah, a trick ! Coward! you cannot destroy my aim.

Starbottle. I overlook the — er — epithet. I wished only to ask, if you should be — er —unfortunate, if there was any thing I could say to your — er — friends.

Concho. You cannot make the fool of me, coward. No!

Starbottle. My object was only precautionary. Owing to the position in which you — er — persist in holding your weapon, in a line with my right eye, I perceive that a ray of light enters the nipple, and — er — illuminates the barrel. I judge from this, that you have been unfortunate enough to draw the — er — er — unloaded pistol.

Concho [*tremulously lowering weapon*]. Eh! Ah! This is murder ! [*Drops pistol.*] Murder ! — eh — help [*retreating*], help ! [*Exit hurriedly door* C., *as clock strikes.* COL. STARBOTTLE *lowers his pistol, and moves with great pomposity to the other side of the table, taking up pistol.*

Starbottle [*examining pistol*]. Ah! [*Lifts it, and discharges it.*] It seems that I am mistaken. [*Going.*] The pistol *was* — er — loaded ! [*Exit.*

SCENE 4. — *Front scene. Room in villa. Enter* MISS MARY *and* JOVITA.

Miss Mary. I tell you, you are wrong. You are not only misunderstanding your lover, which is a woman's privilege; but you are abusing my cousin, which, as his relative, I won't put up with.

Jovita [*passionately*]. But hear me, Miss Mary. It is a year since we were betrothed; and such a betrothal! Why, I was signed, sealed, and delivered to him, on conditions, as if I were a part of the rancho; and the very night, too, I had engaged to run away with him! And during that year I have seen the gentleman twice, — yes, twice!

Miss Mary. But he has written?

Jovita. Mother of God! Yes, — letters delivered by my father, sent to *his care*, read by him first, of course; letters hoping that I was well, and obeying my father's commands; letters assuring me of his unaltered devotion; letters that, compared with the ones he used to hide in the confessional of the ruined mission church, were as ice to fire, were as that snow-flower you value so much, Mary, to this mariposa blossom I wear in my hair. And then to think that this man — this John Oakhurst, as I knew him; this man who used to ride twenty miles for a smile from me on the church porch; this Don Juan who leaped that garden wall (fifteen feet, Mary, if it is an inch), and made old Concho his stepping-stone; this man, who daily perilled death for my sake — is changed into this formal, methodical man of business — is — is — I tell you there's a *woman* at the bottom of it! I know it sure!

Miss Mary [*aside*]. How can I tell her about the Duchess? I won't! [*Aloud.*] But listen, my dear Jovita. You know he is under probation for you, Jovita. All this is for you. His father is cold, methodical, unsympathetic. *He* looks only to his bond

with this son, — this son that he treats, even in matters of the heart, as a *business* partner. Remember, on his complete reformation, and subjection to his father's will, depends your hand. Remember the agreement!

Jovita. The agreement; yes! It is the agreement, always the agreement. May the Devil fly away with the agreement! Look you, Miss Mary, I, Doña Jovita, didn't fall in love with an agreement: it was with a man! Why, I might have married a dozen agreements — yes, of a shorter limitation than this! [*Crossing.*]

Miss Mary. Yes. But what if your lover had failed to keep those promises by which he was to gain your hand? what if he were a man incapable of self-control? what if he were — a — a — drunkard!

Jovita [*musing*]. A drunkard! [*Aside.*] There was Diego, he was a drunkard; but he was faithless. [*Aloud.*] You mean a weak, faithless drunkard?

Miss Mary. No! [*Sadly.*] Faithless only to himself, but devoted — yes, devoted to *you.*

Jovita. Miss Mary, I have found that one big vice in a man is apt to keep out a great many smaller ones.

Miss Mary. Yes; but if he were a slave to liquor?

Jovita. My dear, I should try to change his mistress. Oh, give me a man that is capable of a devotion to any thing, rather than a cold, calculating average of all the virtues!

Miss Mary [*aside*]. I, who aspire to be her teacher, am only her pupil. [*Aloud.*] But what if, in this

very drunkenness, this recklessness, he had once loved and worshipped another woman? What if you discovered all this after — after — he had won your heart?

Jovita. I should adore him! Ah, Miss Mary! Love differs from all the other contagious diseases: the last time a man is exposed to it, he takes it most readily, and has it the worst! But you, *you*, you cannot sympathize with me. You have some lover, the ideal of the virtues; some man as correct, as well regulated, as calm as — yourself; some one who addresses you in the fixed morality and severe penmanship of the copy-books. He will never precipitate himself over a garden wall or through a window. Your Jacob will wait for you through seven years, and receive you from the hands of your cousin and guardian — as a reward of merit! No, you could not love a vagabond.

Miss Mary [*very slowly and quietly*]. No?

Jovita. No! [*Passionately.*] No, it is impossible! Forgive me, Miss Mary: you are good; a better girl than I am. But think of me! A year ago my lover leaped a wall at midnight to fly with me: today, the day that gives me to him, he writes a few cold lines, saying that he has business, *business* — you understand — business, and that he shall not see me until we meet in the presence of — of — of — our fathers.

Miss Mary. Yes; but you will see him at least, perhaps alone. Listen: it is no formal meeting, but one of festivity. My guardian has told me, in his

quaint scriptural way, it is the killing of the fatted calf, over his long-lost prodigal. Have patience, little one. Ah! Jovita, we are of a different race, but we are of one sex; and as a woman I know how to accept another woman's abuse of her lover. Come, come! [*Exeunt* MISS MARY *and* JOVITA.

SCENE 5. — *The drawing-room of* MR. MORTON'S *villa. Large open arch in centre, leading to veranda, looking on distant view of San Francisco; richly furnished, — sofas, arm-chairs, and tête-à-têtes. Enter* COL. STARBOTTLE, C., *carrying bouquet, preceded by* SERVANT, *bowing.*

Starbottle. Take my kyard to Miss Morris. [*Exit* SERVANT.]

Starbottle. Star! This is the momentous epoch of your life! It is a moment for which you — are — I may say alone responsible, — personally responsible! She will be naturally gratified by the — er — flowers. She will at once recognize this bouquet as a delicate *souvenir* of Red Gulch, and will appreciate your recollection. And the fact, the crushing fact, that you have overlooked the — er — ungentlemanly conduct of her *own* cousin Sandy, the real Alexander Morton, that you have — er — assisted to restore the *ex-vaquero* to his rights, will — er — er — at once open the door to — er — mutual confidence and — er — a continuance of that — er — prepossession I have already noticed. Ahem! here she is.

Enter MISS MARY *in full dress.*

Miss Mary. You are early, Col. Starbottle. This promptitude does honor to our poor occasion.

Col. Starbottle. Ged, Miss Mary, promptness with a lady and an adversary is the first duty of — er — gentlemen. I wished that — er — the morning dew might still be — er — fresh in these flowers. I gathered them myself [*presenting bouquet*] at — er — er — flower-stand in the — er — California market.

Miss Mary [*aside*]. Flowers! I needed no such reminder of poor Sandy. [*Aloud.*] I thank you, colonel.

Starbottle. Ged, ma'am, I am repaid doubly. Your conduct, Miss Mary, reminds me of little incident that occurred at Richmond, in '53. Dinner-party — came early — but obliged to go — as now — on important business, before dessert — before dessert. Lady sat next to me — beautiful woman — excuse me if I don't mention names — said to me, "Star," — always called me Star, — "Star, you remind me of the month of May." — "Ged, madam," — I said, "delighted, proud; but why?" — "Because," she said, "you come in with the — er — oysters" — No! Ged, pardon me — ridiculous mistake! I mean — er — "you come in with the — er — flowers, and go before the — er — fruits."

Miss Mary. Ah, colonel! I appreciate her disappointment. Let us hope, however, that some day you may find that happy woman who will be able to keep you through the whole dinner and the whole season, until December and the ices!

Starbottle. Ged! excellent! Capital! [*Seriously.*] Miss Mary! [*Suddenly inflating his chest, striking attitude, and gazing on* MISS MARY *with languishing eyes.*] There is — er — such a woman!

Miss Mary [*aside*]. What can he mean?

Starbottle [*taking seat beside her*]. Allow me, Miss Mary, a few moments of confidential — er — confidential disclosure. To-day is, as you are aware — the day on which, according to — er — agreement between parties, my friend and client Mr. Morton, sen., — formally accepts his prodigal son. It is my — er — duty to state that — er — the gentleman who has for the past year occupied that position has behaved with great discretion, and — er — fulfilled his part of the — er — agreement. But it would — er — appear that there has been a — er — slight delusion regarding the identity of that prodigal, — a delusion shared by all the parties except, perhaps, myself. I have to prepare you for a shock. The gentleman whom you have recently known as Alexander Morton, jun., is not the prodigal son; is not your — er — cousin; is, in fact, no relation to you. Prepare yourself, Miss Mary, for a little disappointment, — for — er — degradation. The genuine son has been — er — discovered in the person of — er — low menial — er — vagabond, — "Sandy," the — er — outcast of Red Gulch!

Miss Mary [*rising in astonishment*]. Sandy! Then he was right. [*Aside.*] The child is his! and that woman —

Starbottle. Compose yourself, Miss Mary. I

know the — er— effect of — er — revelation like this upon — er — proud and aristocratic nature. Ged! My own, I assure you, beats in — er — responsive indignation. You can never consent to remain beneath this roof, and — er — receive a — er — vagabond and — er — menial on equal terms. The — er — necessities of my — er — profession may — er — compel me; but you — er — never! Holding myself — er —er — responsible for having introduced you here, it is my — er — duty to provide you with — another home! It is my —er — duty to protect —

Miss Mary [*aside*]. Sandy here, and beneath this roof! Why has he not sought me? Ah, I know too well: he dare not face me with his child!

Starbottle [*aside*]. She turns away! it is maiden coyness. [*Aloud.*] If, Miss Mary, the — er — devotion of a life-time; if the — er — chivalrous and respectful adoration of a man — er — whose record is — er — not unknown in the Court of Honor [*dropping on one knee with excessive gallantry*]; if the — er — measure —

Miss Mary [*oblivious of* COL. STARBOTTLE]. I *will* — I *must* see him! Ah! [*looking* L.] he is coming!

Enter SANDY.

Starbottle [*rising with great readiness and tact*]. I have found it [*presenting flower*]. It had fallen beneath the sofa.

Sandy [*to* MISS MARY, *stopping short in embarrassment*]. I did not know you — I — I — thought there was no one here.

Miss Mary [*to* STARBOTTLE]. May I ask you to excuse me for a moment? I have a few words to say to — to my *cousin!*

STARBOTTLE *bows gallantly to* MISS MARY, *and stiffly to* SANDY, *and exit* R. *A long pause;* MISS MARY *remains seated pulling flowers,* SANDY *remains standing by wing, foolish and embarrassed. Business.*

Miss Mary [*impatiently*]. Well?

Sandy [*slowly*]. I axes your pardon, miss; but you told *that* gentleman you had a few words — to say to me.

Miss Mary [*passionately, aside*] Fool! [*Aloud.*] I had; but I am waiting to first answer your inquiries about your — your — child. I have fulfilled my trust, sir.

Sandy. You have, Miss Mary, and I thank you.

Miss Mury. I might perhaps have expected that this revelation of our kinship would have come from other lips than a stranger's; but — no matter! I wish you joy, sir, of your heritage. [*Going.*] You have found a home, sir, at last, for yourself and — and — your child. Good-day, sir.

Sandy. Miss Mary!

Miss Mary. I must make ready to receive your father's guests. It is his orders: I am only his poor relation. Good-by, sir. [*Exit* L.

Sandy [*watching her*]. She is gone! — gone! No! She has dropped on the sofa in the ante-room, and is crying. Crying! I promised Jack I wouldn't speak until the time came. I'll go back. [*Hesitating, and*

looking toward L.] Poor girl! How she must hate me! I might just say a word, one word to thank her for her kindness to Johnny, — only one word, and then go away. I — I — can keep from liquor. I swore I would to Jack, that night I saw the old man — drunk, — and I have. But — I can't keep — from — her! No — damn it! [*Going toward* L.] No! — I'll go!

[*Exit* L.

Enter hurriedly and excitedly JOVITA R., *followed by* MANUELA.

Jovita. Where is she? Where is *he*? — the traitor!

Manuela [*entreatingly*]. Compose yourself, Doña Jovita, for the love of God! This is madness: believe me, there is some mistake. It is some trick of an enemy, — of that ingrate, that *coyote*, Concho, who hates the Don Alexandro.

Jovita. A trick! Call you this a trick? Look at this paper, put into my hands by my father a moment ago. Read it. Ah! listen. [*Reads.*] "In view of the *evident preferences* of my son Alexander Morton, I hereby revoke my consent to his marriage with the Doña Jovita Castro, and accord him full permission to woo and win his cousin, Miss Mary Morris!" Call you this a trick, eh? No, it is their perfidy! This is why *she* was brought here on the eve of my betrothal. This accounts for his silence, his absence. Oh, I shall go mad!

Manuela. Compose yourself, miss. If I am not deceived, there is one here who will aid us, — who will expose this deceit. Listen: an hour ago, as I

passed through the hall, I saw Diego, our old Diego, — your friend and confidant, Diego.

Jovita. The drunkard — the faithless Diego!

Manuela. Never, Miss Jovita; not drunken! For, as he passed before me, he was as straight, as upright, as fine as your lover. Come, miss, we will seek him.

Jovita. Never! He, too, is a traitor.

Manuela. Believe me, no! Come, Miss Jovita. [*Looking toward* L.] See, he is there. Some one is with him.

Jovita [*looking*]. You are right; and it is *she* — *she*, Miss Mary! What? he is kissing her hand! and she — *she*, the double traitress — drops her head upon his shoulder! Oh, this is infamy!

Manuela. Hush! Some one is coming. The guests are arriving. They must not see you thus. This way, Miss Jovita, — this way. After a little, a little, the mystery will be explained. [*Taking* JOVITA'S *hand, and leading her* R.]

Jovita [*going*]. And this was the correct schoolmistress, the preceptress and example of all the virtues! ha! [*laughing hysterically*] ha!

[*Exeunt* JOVITA *and* MANUELA.

SCENE 6. — *The same. Enter* SERVANT; *opens folding-doors* C., *revealing veranda, and view of distant city beyond. Stage, fog effect from without. Enter* STARBOTTLE *and* OAKHURST, R., *in full evening dress.*

Starbottle [*walking towards veranda*]. A foggy evening for our anniversary.

Oakhurst. Yes. [*Aside.*] It was such a night as this I first stepped into Sandy's place, I first met the old man. Well, it will be soon over. [*Aloud.*] You have the papers and transfers all ready?

Starbottle. In my — er — pocket. Mr. Morton, sen., should be here to receive his guests.

Oakhurst. He will be here presently: until then the duty devolves on me. He has secluded himself even from me! [*Aside.*] Perhaps it is in very shame for his recent weakness.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Don José Castro, Miss Castro, and Miss Morris.

Enter DON JOSÉ *with* JOVITA *and* MISS MARY *on either arm. All formally salute* MR. OAKHURST, *except* MISS JOVITA, *who turns coldly away, taking seat remotely on sofa.* COL. STARBOTTLE *gallantly approaches* MISS MARY, *and takes seat beside her.*

Oakhurst [*aside*]. They are here to see my punishment. There is no sympathy even in her eyes.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Concepcion Garcia and Mr. Capper.

Concho [*approaching* OAKHURST, *rubbing his hands*]. I wish you joy, Mr. Alexander Morton!

Oakhurst [*excitedly, aside*]. Shall I throw him from the window! The dog! — even he!

Capper [*approaching* MR. OAKHURST]. You have done well. Be bold. *I* will see you through. As for

that man [*pointing to* CONCHO], leave him to *me!* [*Lays his hand on* CONCHO'S *shoulder, and leads him to sofa* R. OAKHURST *takes seat in chair* L. *as* SANDY *enters quietly from door* L., *and stands leaning upon his chair.*

Starbottle [*rising*]. Ladies and gentlemen, we are waiting only for the presence of Mr. Alexander Morton, sen. I regret to say that for the last twenty-four hours — he has been — er — exceedingly pre-occupied with the momentous cares of the — er — occasion. You who know the austere habits of my friend and — er — client will probably understand that he may be at this very moment engaged in prayerful and Christian meditation, invoking the Throne of Grace, previous to the solemn duties of — er — er — to-night.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Alexander Morton, sen.

Enter OLD MORTON, *drunk, in evening costume, cravat awry, coat half buttoned up, and half surly, half idiotic manner. All rise in astonishment.* SANDY *starts forward.* OAKHURST *pulls him back.*

Morton [*thickly*]. Don't rish! Don't rish! We'll all sit down! How do you do, sir? I wish ye well, miss. [*Goes around and laboriously shakes hands with everybody.*] Now lesh all take a drink! lesh you take a drink, and you take a drink, and you take a drink!

Starbottle. Permit me, ladies and gentlemen, to — er — explain: our friend is — er — evidently laboring under — er — er — accident of hospitality! In a moment he will be himself.

Old Morton. Hush up! Dry up — yourself — old turkey-cock! Eh!

Sandy [*despairingly*]. He will not understand us! [*To* STARBOTTLE.] He will not know me! What is to be done?

Old Morton. Give me some whishkey. Lesh all take a drink! [*Enter* SERVANT *with decanter and glasses.*]

Old Morton [*starting forward*]. Lesh all take a drink!

Sandy. Stop!

Old Morton [*recovering himself slightly*]. Who says stop? Who dares countermand my orderish?

Concho [*coming forward*]. Who? I will tell you: eh! eh! Diego — dismissed from the rancho of Don José for drunkenness! Sandy — the vagabond of Red Gulch!

Sandy [*passionately seizing* OLD MORTON'S *arm*]. Yes, Diego — Sandy — the outcast — but, God help me! no longer the drunkard. I forbid you to touch that glass! — I, your son, Alexander Morton! Yes, look at me, father: I, with drunkenness in my blood, planted by you, fostered by you — I whom you sought to save — I — I, stand here to save you! Go! [*To* SERVANT.] Go! While he is thus, I — *I*, am master here!

Old Morton [*cowed and frightened*]. That voice! [*Passing his hand over his forehead.*] Am I dreaming? Aleck, where are you? Alexander, speak, I command you: is this the truth?

Oakhurst [*slowly*]. It is!

Starbottle. One moment — a single moment: permit me to — er — er — explain. The gentleman who has just — er — dismissed the refreshment is, to the best of my legal knowledge, your son. The gentleman who for the past year has so admirably filled the functions of that office is — er — prepared to admit this. The proofs are — er — conclusive. It is with the — er — intention of offering them, and — er — returning your lawful heir, that we — er — are here to-night.

Old Morton [*rising to his feet*]. And I renounce you both! Out of my house, out of my sight, out of my heart, forever! Go! liars, swindlers, confederates! Drunk —

Oakhurst [*retiring slowly with* SANDY]. We are going, sir!

Old Morton. Go! open the doors there *wide*, wide enough for such a breadth of infamy! Do you hear me? *I* am master here!

Stands erect, as OAKHURST *and* SANDY, *hand in hand, slowly retreat backward to centre, — then suddenly utters a cry, and falls heavily on sofa. Both pause:* OAKHURST *remains quiet and motionless;* SANDY, *after a moment's hesitation, rushes forward, and falls at his feet.*

Sandy. Father, forgive me!

Old Morton [*putting his hand round* SANDY'S *neck, and motioning him to door*]. Go! both of you, both of you! [*Resisting* SANDY'S *attempt to rise.*] Did you hear me? Go!

Starbottle. Permit me to — explain. Your conduct, Mr. Morton, reminds me of sing'lar incident in '47 —

Old Morton. Silence!

Oakhurst. One word, Mr. Morton! Shamed and disgraced as I am, I leave this roof more gladly than I entered it. How I came here, you best know. How I yielded madly to the temptation, the promise of a better life; how I fell, through the hope of reformation, — no one should know better than you, sir, the reformer. I do not ask your pardon. You know that I did my duty to you as your presumed son. Your real son will bear witness, that, from the hour I knew of his existence, I did my duty equally to him. Col. Starbottle has all the legal transfers and papers necessary to make the restoration of your son — the integrity of your business name — complete. I take nothing out of this life that I did not bring in it, — except my self-respect! I go — as I came — alone!

Jovita [*rushing towards him*]. No! no! You shall take *me!* I have wronged you, Jack, cruelly; I have doubted you; but you shall not go alone. I care not for this contract! You are more to me, by your own right, Jack, than by any kinship with such as these!

Oakhurst [*raising her gently*]. I thank you, darling. But it is too late now. To be more worthy of you, to win *you*, I waived the title I had to you in my own manhood, to borrow another's more legal claim. I, who would not win you as a gambler, cannot make you now the wife of a convicted impostor. No! Hear me, darling! do not make my disgrace greater than

it is. In the years to come, Jovita, think of me as one who loved you well enough to go through shame to win you, but too well to ask you to share with him that shame. Farewell, darling, farewell! [*Releases himself from* JOVITA'S *arms, who falls beside him.*]

Concho [*rubbing his hands, and standing before him*]. Oho! Mr. John Oakhurst — eh — was it for this, eh — you leaped the garden wall, eh? was it for this you struck me down, eh? You are not wise, eh? You should have run away with the Doña when you could — ah, ah, impostor!

Sandy [*leaping to his feet*]. Jack, you shall not go! I will go with you!

Oakhurst. No! Your place is there. [*Pointing to* OLD MORTON, *whose head has sunk drunkenly on his breast.*] Heed not this man; his tongue carries only the borrowed lash of his master.

Concho. Eh! you are bold now — bold; but I said I would have revenge — ah, revenge!

Sandy [*rushing towards him*]. Coward!

Don José. Hold your hand, sir! Hold! I allow no one to correct my menials, but myself. Concho, order my carriage!

Concho. It is ready, sir.

Don José. Then lead the way to it, for my daughter and her husband, John Oakhurst. — Good night, Mr. Morton. I can sympathize with you; for we have both found a son. I am willing to exchange my dismissed servant for your dismissed *partner.*

Starbottle [*advancing*]. Ged, sir, I respect you! Ged, sir, permit me, sir, to grasp that honorable hand!

Old Morton [*excitedly*]. He is right, my partner What have I done! The house of Morton & Son dissolved. The man known as my partner — a fugitive! No, Alexander!

Starbottle. One moment — a single moment! As a lawyer, permit me to say, sir, that the whole complication may be settled, sir, by the — er — addition of — er — single letter! The house of Morton & Son shall hereafter read Morton & Sons. The papers for the legal adoption of Mr. Oakhurst are — er — in my pocket.

Old Morton [*more soberly*]. Have it your own way, sir! Morton & Sons be it. Hark ye, Don José! We are equal at last. But — hark ye, Aleck! How about the boy, eh? — my grandson, eh? Is this one of the sons by adoption?

Sandy [*embarrassedly*]. It is my own, sir.

Capper [*advancing*]. He can with safety claim it; for the mother is on her way to Australia with her husband.

Old Morton. And the schoolma'am, eh?

Miss Mary. She will claim the usual year of probation for your prodigal, and then —

Sandy. God bless ye, Miss Mary!

Old Morton. I am in a dream! But the world — my friends — my patrons — how can I explain?

Starbottle. I will — er — explain. [*Advancing slowly to front — to audience.*] One moment — er — a single moment! If any thing that has — er — transpired this evening — might seem to you, ladies and gentlemen — er — morally or — er — legally — or honorably

to require — er — apology or — er — explanation! — permit me to say — that I — Col. Culpepper Starbottle, hold myself responsible — er — personally responsible.

Capper. *Concho.*

Old Morton. *Sandy.* *Miss Mary.* *Don José.* *Jovita.* *Oakhurst.*

Col. Starbottle.

[*Curtain.*]

THE END.